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CONTENTS

Winner of the 1997 Richard Reuss Prize for Students of Folklore and History 4

Editor's Introduction: Thoms, Child, and Boas
Ronald L. Baker 5

Symposium on the Contribution of Francis James Child to Folklore Studies

Dianne Dugaw, *Francis Child, Cecil Sharp, and the Legacy of the Pastoral in Folksong Study* 7

Edward D. Ives, *Francis James Child: Some Thoughts While Shaving* 13

Barre Toelken, *The Contributions of Francis James Child to Folklore and Literary Studies* 16

"All the Riches That We Boast Consist in Scraps of Paper": English Ballad Tradition and Emergent Capitalism in the Eighteenth Century
Dianne Dugaw 18

"How Got the Apples In?": Individual Creativity and Ballad Tradition
Edward D. Ives 31

What the Parrot Tells Us That Child Did Not: Some Reconsiderations of Ballad Metaphor
Barre Toelken 41

The Forsaken Founder, William John Thoms: From Antiquities to Folklore
R. Troy Boyer 55

The Function of Form in Boas's Social Science Modernism
Gregory Hansen 62

The Perspective of the Artist: Ruth Bunzel and Franz Boas on Material Culture
Peter Harle 74

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WINNER OF THE 1997 RICHARD REUSS PRIZE FOR STUDENTS OF FOLKLORE AND HISTORY

The Folklore and History Section of the American Folklore Society is pleased to announce that R. Troy Boyer has won the 1997 Richard Reuss Prize for Students of Folklore and History for his essay "The Forsaken Founder, William John Thoms: From Antiquities to Folklore."

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Editor's Introduction: *Thoms, Child, and Boas*

Ronald L. Baker

This issue of *The Folklore Historian* honors three founders of the discipline we now proudly call *folklore*: the English antiquary William John Thoms, the American philologist Francis James Child, and the American anthropologist Franz Boas. Thoms (1803-1885) generally is credited with coining the word "folk-lore" in 1846, for in a letter to *The Athenaeum* (August 22, 1846:862-63), using the pseudonym Ambrose Merton, he wrote: "Your pages have so often given evidence of the interest which you take in what we in England designate as Popular Antiquities, or Popular Literature (though by-the-bye it is more a Lore than a Literature, and would be most aptly described by a good Saxon compound, Folk-Lore,—the *the Lore of the People*) . . . (remember I claim the honor of introducing the epithet Folk-Lore . . .)" Though Thoms rightly claimed the honor of "introducing" "Folk-Lore" to his readers, we now know that he was not the first to use the word, which has existed in the English language since at least the ninth century, for as Jeffrey Alan Mazo points out in a recent issue of *Folklore*, "The compound *folklār* ("folklore") occurs in three Anglo-Saxon manuscripts . . . and an eleventh-century collection of Latin-Anglo-Saxon glosses" (1996:107). Still, though Thoms did not introduce the word "folklore" into the English language, he must be credited with introducing the word to the nineteenth-century reading public and with naming our discipline. His notion of folklore also influenced the study of folklore in England and the United States, for when the Folk-Lore Society was founded in England in 1878, Thoms became its Director; and ten years later the American Folklore Society, with Francis James Child as President, was founded on the English model. It is altogether fitting, as Thoms evidently realized, that the discipline that studies traditional culture took its name from traditional Anglo-Saxon usage.

The literary study of folklore in the United States began at Harvard University around 1856 when Francis James Child (1825-1896) began his life's work on English and Scottish folk ballads. Though Child did not develop any folklore courses at Harvard, he incorporated folklore in his literature courses, created the Folklore Collection in the Harvard College Library, and trained several notable American folklorists, including George Lyman Kittredge, successor to Child's English professorship in 1894. Through Child's pioneering work in folklore and Kittredge's development of folklore studies, Harvard became the center for the literary study of folklore in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

While literary folklorists in North America were studying and teaching folklore from manuscripts and printed sources, in 1883 Franz Boas (1858-1942) began his career as an anthropological folklorist in the field among the Eskimos of Baffin. Five years later, while serving on the faculty of Clark University, he began his monumental collection of Native American folklore in British Columbia. While anthropological folklorists like Daniel Garrison Brinton attempted to place folklore studies in the museum, Boas established a base for the anthropological study of folklore at Columbia University, where in 1899 he began his long career as Professor of Anthropology. Inspired by Boas and his students, other anthropologists began to incorporate folklore, especially Native American traditions,

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into their courses. Boas also encouraged scholars like Marius Barbeau, who collected French-Canadian folklore, to study North American ethnic traditions as well as Native American traditions. One of Boas's students, Ruth Bunzel, who contributed significantly to the development of the study of material culture in North America, is recognized in this volume.

The following papers constituting the Symposium on the Contribution of Francis James Child to Folklore Studies were read at the annual meeting of the Hoosier Folklore Society held at Indiana State University on December 6, 1996, as part of a week-long celebration of Francis James Child on the centenary of his death. The other ballad papers by Professors Dugaw, Ives, and Toelken in this issue were presented as Joseph S. Schick Lectures at Indiana State University on December 3, 4, and 5, 1996.

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Symposium on the Contribution of Francis James Child to Folklore Studies

Francis Child, Cecil Sharp, and the Legacy of the Pastoral in Folksong Study

Dianne Dugaw

Francis Child's extensive historical collecting and internationally comparative approach have provided indispensable foundations to the folkloristic approach to songs in culture. The New Englander Child wittingly carried on the democratization of literary culture that early students of European folklore—such scholars as Percy, Scott, the Grimms, and William Thoms—had begun, for the most part unwittingly.[1] Studying popular ballads and tales, they studied materials other than those traditions of the sons of the sons of privileged men that had long constituted "civilization." Since the 18th-century beginnings of the discipline, folklorists have studied the lore of people whose voices had before that time only rarely surfaced in the annals of Western thought.[2] Folklore scholarship in Europe and America initiated this undertaking, which other disciplines are now taking up with an exhilarating vengeance to widen the circle of "culture" to include "other" voices previously unheard, eclipsed, or marginalized: women, colonial subjects, native peoples, and minorities of different sorts.

Child's monumental editing of *The English Scottish Popular Ballads* follows from William Motherwell's conception of an authentic and pure oral tradition in which ballads persist in variants whose integrity must be respected. Certainly Child responded to and captured in his work the powerful spirit that people find in songs and the mysterious cultural tenacities of song traditions. At the same time, those keystones of Anglo-American folksong scholarship, Francis Child in the United States and Cecil Sharp in Great Britain, bequeathed to us aspects of ideology that now merit further examination and reconsideration. Considering Child and Sharp together makes it possible for us to recognize conceptual underpinnings of their scholarship that have limited what kinds of songs and what aspects of them folklorists have deemed worthy of study. As a scholar interested in broadside ballads, I have been especially interested in understanding the bases for both scholars' dismissal of the rich repository of songs in these printed and—to Child and Sharp—"adulterated" materials.

Despite their separate foci—Child on narrative texts and Sharp on orally transmitted tunes—these two scholars had much in common: a retrospective conception of song traditions; a patriotically tinged belief in a collective past that had all but disappeared; a concentration on questions of purity, orality, and authenticity; the educational application of their theories and collections in Britain and America; and the direct relation of their beliefs about ballad and folksong to the economic order and the social, intellectual, and national preoccupations of the modern world. Preoccupied with an idyllic, unrecoverable past, both Child and Sharp collected and studied songs as fragmentary relics that only a specialist could decipher. Their influence has percolated through folksong scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic.

The literary pastoral is perhaps the single most important idea shaping the origins and development of folklore scholarship. Certainly it hovers behind folksong theory. M. H.

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Abrams defines the pastoral as "a deliberately conventional poem expressing an urban poet's nostalgic image of the peace and simplicity of the life of shepherds and other rural folk in an idealized setting."[3] From the 18th-century beginnings of folksong study, scholars have proceeded with a conviction, at some times implicit and at others explicit, that the lore we study is universal, ahistorical, linked to some version of a Golden Age. The ideology of the pastoral—that is, a nostalgic image of an ideal purity and simplicity, and of the separateness of the rural setting and its people—has shaped the very idea of "the folks" and their ballads, tunes, tales, and other "lore." This idea provides a key to understanding the approaches of both Child and Sharp, and their formulations of a purer oral tradition necessarily opposed to the tainted commercial world of print.

In his 1875 entry on "Ballad Poetry" in *Johnson's New Universal Cyclopaedia*, Child describes how he thinks his ballads fit into the cultural history of English-speaking people. He imagines an Arcadian context for these ballads and their singers, a pastoral Golden Age. He writes:

> Ballads were popular in the large and strict sense; that is, they were the creation and the manifestation of the whole people, great and humble, who were still one in all essentials, having the same belief, the same ignorance, and the same tastes, and living in much closer relations than now.[4]

Child projects a sentimentalized world, a people purer, simpler, more rudimentary, yet morally better—more whole, more at one, in closer relations—than we are.

Rippling through Child's description of "the primitive ballad" and its creators, one hears the ideology of the pastoral, particularly as it found its way from 18th-century literary discourse into folksong study through Percy, Scott, and Motherwell. Child's formulation hinges upon its retrospection. Of songs in the Balkans he remarks:

> We find the national poetry, there, in a condition closely resembling that in which it was among the races of Northern and Eastern Europe many hundred years ago.[5]

Child's cherishing of the otherness of the past leads to a disparagement of the present voiced in social terms. He finds ballad poetry in his own time "abandoned to an uncultivated or not over-cultivated class—a constantly diminishing number."[6] Just as the pastoral imagines its shepherd poets "the best of men" in a "golden age," Child imagines his balladmakers from a "cultivated" ruling order in a markedly non-urban Arcadia.

Sharp, as we recall, had more interest in the tunes than the words to the songs he collected. (The contrast between the English musicians and the American English professors is often made.) But what interests me are the similarities, particularly shared underlying concepts and preoccupations. For Sharp early on, as for Child, a morally-charged aesthetic of "purity" set true folksongs apart from "rubbish." Already in 1903 Sharp declared:

> Submit Folk music to analysis and it will be found free from pretence or affectation, spotlessly pure and devoid of all vulgarity . . . it is independent of time.[7]

Sharp's is also a retrospective viewpoint, a lament for the passing of a Golden Age represented by these songs. In the same talk he says:

> . . . every year marks the death of many old peasant ballad singers, and with them the disappearance for ever of countless traditional songs. But why? You may well ask—do we allow these beautiful songs, our national heritage, to be swept away before our very eyes.[8]

Like Child, Sharp sees in the songs fading remnants of a better past, and a past important to the identity and making of the nation. Like Child's, Sharp's Golden Age was rooted in real time. It was an idealized pre-modern Europe. In 1905 he describes this society in terms like Child's:

> Now, in Folk-poetry, Folk-ballad, Folk-tale, and Folk-song, we are dealing with the output of this earlier period, when the wit was not the individual but the community; we are dealing with the product of a people as yet undivided into a lettered and an unlettered class. We are thinking of a time when in a common atmosphere of ignorance, so far as booklore is concerned, one habit of thought and one standard of action animated every member from Prince to Plough-boy.[9]

Striking in both Sharp's and Child's ideas, in addition to the shared pastoral ideal, is the rootedness in middle-class concerns, conditions, and values. Speaking about his collecting, Sharp actually pictures himself poised between people above him and people below, between the upper and lower classes:

> After all there is only one way of getting the yokel to sing to you, and that is to shake off as much as possible of your conventional civilization and convince him that you come as an enthusiastic lover of old songs and are come to admire not to criticize. If you appear to them as one of the gentry you will be treated to the songs which they believe the gentry like . . . and then you will feel very keenly the indignity of being classed with the 'gentry' at least I did.[10]

Indeed, both Child and Sharp—editors and collectors—stand in a middleman's role, a merchant or broker position, as they prepare their "homegrown" products for a market of consumers stationed at their level or above. In remarks resonant of Child's *Cyclopedia* essay, Sharp actually makes the connection between the ideal community his songs represent for him and the political ideals of bourgeois Britain and North America. He says:

> A great gulf exists between the time before letters and afterwards . . . Ballads belong not only to one nation but to the whole of Europe, even a larger area than that. . . . If we trace those who are responsible for making ballads, we must trace not famous men but the undistinguished, common poets. So that our ballads are rooted in democracy. They came really from the crowd, from the people, and the people were much more homogeneous than they are now.[11]

This idea that folksong materials represent a non-literate and vanished Golden Age resulted in a number of predilections in the scholarship that followed Sharp and Child. As many have noted, collectors early on began to document that ballad and song traditions were far from dead. At the same time, early collectors prized archaic pieces and tended to exaggerate their antiquity. Sometimes they ignored important materials and facts that did

not fit this conviction of purity and orality, thus creating an image of ballad and folksong fitted more to the concept of a Golden Age than to the patterns of British and American singers of any era.[12]

For both Sharp and Child, aesthetic and ideological notions of purity serve to exclude unacceptable materials, notably printed songs. Both scholars identify stylistic criteria for their disapprobation of such "rubbish." Neither acknowledges the pastoral assumptions unmistakably at work in their exclusions of urban street songs. In his work Child consistently links the degeneration of a golden age of ballad tradition to urbanization and commerce, citing in dismay the "uncultivated" ballads of the broadside and chapbook presses. Their impurity, scurrility, and tarnish Child asserts time and again. As he states in "Ballad Poetry":

> The vulgar ballads of our day, the 'broadsides' . . . belong to a different genus; they are products of a low kind of *art*, and most of them are, from a literary point of view, thoroughly despicable and worthless.[13]

At a later time, he ferociously penciled into the margins of a notebook full of street ballads: "I shall not print this stuff!"[14]

Recently recovered remarks by Child set out his conviction that the "primitive" balladry he so valued should be distinguished utterly from the printed songs of chapbooks and broadsides. In a book review of 1868, Child laments the London Ballad Society's project of bringing into print the Pepys and Roxburghe collections of seventeenth-century blackletter ballad broadsides before considering the ballads he favored: "the genuine ballads of the people . . . preserved in manuscripts or floating in the memories of the people."[15] Certainly one sees in this lament the seeds of Child's own monumental publishing project of the next several decades, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.[16] In addition, Child further discloses the rootedness of his view of acceptable and unacceptable ballads in a pastoral ideal shaped by literary study. Child describes an earlier collection of "broadsides or flying leaves" as supplying "about as dull and useless reading as in a considerable acquaintance with worthless literature we have ever met with."[17] (The aesthetic and stylistic grounds of his disdain for such a "dark heap" of "dull and useless reading" are telling.) Child then urges a search for "all that is left, or all that can be found, of the genuine ballads of the people," clearly linking these ballads to a vision of a countryside unspoiled by urban influence:

> Ransack the public libraries . . . Hunt up private manuscripts. Where is the manuscript of Mrs. Brown of Falkland . . . where are the Mrs. Farquhars, the Mrs. Browns, the Mrs. Arnots, the Miss Rutherfords themselves, and the nurses who taught them ballads? Small hope, we acknowledge, of finding such nurses any more, or such foster-children, and yet it cannot be that the diffusion of useful knowledge, the intrusion of railroads, and the general progress of society, have quite driven all the old songs out of country-women's heads. . . . From these sources, public libraries, parish scrap-books, and the memory of living persons, it is probable that much might be gathered. . . . [A]nd although it is certain that anything handed down by oral tradition is corrupted and mutilated on the way, . . . we insist on having the actual tradition placed before our eyes.[18]

Child sets out his dichotomy between print and oral tradition. Pointedly his conception of "the genuine ballads of the people" is rooted in his identification of them as "old songs out of country-women's heads," songs that represent a rural world untainted by "the intrusion of railroads, and the general progress of society." The "old songs" that interest Child represent a rural innocence being swept away by "railroads" and "progress"—in the language of the literary pastoral, an arcadian Golden Age.

Broadsides and chapbooks have been disturbing witnesses to a manifestly ungolden age. While on the one hand these ephemeral pieces of paper have close ties to the rural and lower-class people whose culture has been imagined as "folklore," at the same time, they represent an upsettingly nonpastoral context tainted with economics, modern class stratification, and the urban environment.[19] An immense array of archival material from the early modern era brings into view (if we look at it) a fascinating paper marketplace for widespread popular preoccupations, customs, values, representations, humor, pathos, aesthetics, and behaviors.[20] This gallimaufry of stuff insists that traditional forms and ideas arise, thrive, and fall away over time, taking shape in the tangible, traceable materials, circumstances, and ideologies of history. I salute the monumental scholarship of Francis Child. At the same time, I appreciate Child's inheritance of and refashioning of predilections of his own scholarly tradition, notably the literary pastoral. For my part, I say: When we talk about ballad theory, let's identify the legacy of the pastoral as it has shaped that theory from the 18th century onward. When we talk about ballad traditions, let's include the broadsides and chapbooks that participate in that tradition and give us the historical documents to understand it over time. When we talk about folksongs, let us follow the lead of Helen Hartness Flanders and Phillips Barry who declared the inclusiveness of our field: the whole motley range of songs "that most folks [are] fond of singing."[21]

Notes

1. For the standard survey of British folklore studies, see Richard Dorson, *The British Folklorists: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). Recent studies include Rosemary Levy Zumwalt, *American Folklore Scholarship: A Dialogue of Dissent* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988) and Simon Bronner, *American Folklore Studies: An Intellectual History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986). On folksong scholarship, see James Porter, "Convergence, Divergence, and Dialectic in Folksong Paradigms: Critical Directions for Transatlantic Scholarship," *Journal of American Folklore*, 106 (1993):61-98. See also Dianne Dugaw, ed., *The Anglo-American Ballad: A Folklore Casebook* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995).

2. The term "folklore," as we know, only came into use in the nineteenth century. However, by "folklorists" I here mean those scholars whose endeavours, like those of Percy and Scott, mark the origins of what was to be called folklore. On the origins of the term in English, see Dorson's discussion of the nineteenth-century antiquarian, William John Thoms, *British Folklorists*, 75-90. For the 1846 essays in which Thoms coins the term, see *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths: Selections from the British Folklorists*, Richard M. Dorson, ed., 2 Vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), I, 51-65. For an overview of the term and its history, see "folklore and mythology" in *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, Maria Leach, ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 403-407.

3. M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 6th edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1993), 141.

4. Francis J. Child, "Ballad Poetry," *Johnson's New Universal Cyclopaedia*, 4 Vols. (New York: A. J. Johnson, 1875-80), I, 366. The essay extends from pp. 365-68. For a recent close reading of this essay, see Michael J. Bell, "'No Borders to the Ballad Maker's Art': Francis James Child and the Politics of the People," *Western Folklore* 47 (1988):285-307.

5. Child, 367. Bell (p. 292) suggests that Child's careful avoidance of the word "folk" in favor of "popular" indicates that his balladsingers belong in a "recent past," that is, an idealized feudal Europe. Child's image is a Medieval golden age. As Bell argues, from this idea of Child sprang the pursuit of folksong origins in communal composition undertaken by his scholarly descendants, Francis Gummere and George Lyman Kittredge. In the standard account of this phase of folklore history, D. K. Wilgus distances Child from the communalists. See his *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1959), 53-122.

6. Child, 365.

7. Cecil Sharp Material, Misc. Box 2, Folder 1. ["Lecture. Hampstead. Nov. 1903"], 5.

8. Ibid., 11.

9. Cecil Sharp Material, Misc. Box 2. Folder 1. ["Lecture on Folk Songs from Somerset. Hampstead. March 1905"], 4.

10. ["Lecture. Hampstead. Nov. 1903"], 18.

11. Cecil Sharp Material, Misc. Box 2. Folder 7, ["A Lecture on 'English Ballads' . . . at the Swedish Gymnastic Institute. 11 March 1920"], 3-5.

12. See Robert S. Thomson, "The Development of the Broadside Ballad Trade and Its Influence upon the Transmission of English Folksongs" (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1974).

13. Child, "Ballad Poetry," 367.

14. From a manuscript entitled "Rejected Pieces" in the Harvard collection of Child's papers, 25241.47F, Vol.I, 43.

15. "Ballad Books," *The Nation* 7 (Sept. 3, 1868):192-93. The remarks cited appear on p. 193. This essay with a companion piece is reprinted in Sigrid Rieuwerts, "F. J. Child and the Ballad Cause," *Journal of Folklore Research* 31 (1994):27-34.

16. Francis James Child, ed., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 Vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1882-98). The work also appears in a twentieth-century reprint edition (New York: Dover, 1965).

17. Child, "Ballad Books," 193. Child refers to the mid-century publications of John Payne Collier.

18. Ibid. Of course, folksong scholars, beginning with Child himself, have found answers to these questions about manuscripts. For recent studies of early Scottish women singers and the manuscripts of their ballads, see David Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972) and William B. McCarthy, *The Ballad Matrix: Personality, Milieu, and the Oral Tradition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

19. In the United States Harvard University's Houghton Library holds the most extensive collection though other libraries have large holdings such as Yale University's Beinecke Library, the Rare Books Division of the Library of Congress, Special Collections of the University Research Library at UCLA, and the Newberry Library in Chicago. Extensive collections in Britain are in the British Library, the Bodeleian Library at Oxford University, Magdalene College at Cambridge University, Trinity College in Dublin, and many other archives.

20. For an introduction to broadside and chapbook publishing history, see Leslie Shepard, *The History of Street Literature* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973). See also his *The Broadside Ballads* (London: Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., 1962; rpt. Hatboro, Pa.: Legacy Books, 1978). For more scholarly studies of aspects of the subject, see Natascha Würzbach, *The Rise of the English Street Ballad, 1550-1650*, trans. Gayna Walls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Hyder Rollins, "The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad," *PMLA* 34 (1919):258-339; and Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and Its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982).

21. Helen Hartness Flanders, Elizabeth Flanders Ballard, George Brown, and Phillips Barry, eds., *The New Green Mountain Songster* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), v.

Francis James Child: Some Thoughts While Shaving

Edward D. Ives

What can I possibly say that can add to the huge body of commentary on this man, the hochgecelebrated Francis James Child? Not much, I'm afraid. He has all but been canonized by some, demonized by others. He singlehandedly saved the ballad from oblivion; he is the source of our major ballad-study problems. He had an instinct that told him what was a ballad, what was not; he had no theoretical underpinning for his choices. His great collection is the beginning of all our wisdom; his great collection rides us like the Old Man of the Mountains, weighing us down, holding us back, stifling us. Have it how you will, or have it in between somewhere, it is still true that even his most outspoken critics stand hat in hand before they launch their respectful attacks. The man and his work are twin colossi in the field of ballad study.

I have no intention of either attacking or defending him in this brief presentation, but I thought it might be interesting to show him as I have seen him while I was in the process writing a small book on the Scottish ballad (or ballads), "The Bonny Earl of Murray," which he included in his collection as number 181. In order to show you this properly, though, I have to make three excursions, one to Mexico, another to the coast of Labrador, and a third to my own beloved stamping ground of Maine and the Canadian Maritimes.

In a 1992 article, "Folklore as Commemorative Discourse,"[1] John McDowell claimed that the performance of Mexican *corridos* often involved "a conversational prologue and epilogue allowing performers and audience members to indulge in commentary about the songs," and, calling the commentary *informative*, the song *commemorative* discourse, he felt that much could be learned from studying "the peculiar bond linking these contrastive discourse styles." That is to say that a singer would often give some sort of discursive introduction to a *corrido* , explaining something about it, before he began singing, and, afterwards (and sometimes even during the singing) members of the audience would comment further upon it. What McDowell suggests is that we look on all three—prologue, song, after-comments—not as separate entities but as parts of a performed whole. Oddly enough, I was reminded of MacEdward Leach's experience in Labrador, which I quote from his Introduction to Folk *Ballads and Songs of the Lower Labrador Coast* (1965). He was describing a typical evening visit:

> There is talk, the unending talk about the fish, the weather, the out-of-the-run events of the day. Pipes are going. An hour or so slips by. Someone calls out, "Uncle Peter, how about giving us a song?" Uncle Peter smiles, "What'll it be?" And then he answers his own question, "I'll sing 'Jimmie Whelan'; that one is a good song. Many a time my father sang that one. Some of you'll mind him singing 'Jimmie Whelan.' He learned me that song when I was just about as big as the lad there."[2]

After the song is over, says Leach, "there is no applause or extravagant praise. Rather there are quiet remarks here and there, 'That's sure a good song,' or 'A song like that, it's got more truth than a preacher's sermon.'" Further along, Leach remarks that when a local song is sung, "the listeners immediately identify with the song and live in it. When it is

over, then every omitted detail must be brought forth and reminisced," leading him to suggest "that song may be just a stimulus, prompting memory and leading the listeners to re-live the event."[3]

I have seen it work out that way in Maine and the Maritimes. A song was frequently embedded in commentary about where it had been learned, who used to sing it, what this-or-that phrase meant, where the action had taken place, what "really" happened, etc., but I should add the rather obvious observation that this informative discourse would thicken in proportion both to the song's topicality and to the presence of an outsider in the audience, especially one—a junketing folklorist, say—who is obviously interested in what's going on.

Although both McDowell and Leach were describing what went on in oral performance (and so was I), I began to see a parallel to what I was finding with "The Bonny Earl of Murray," which, apparently, had nothing but a printed tradition in Great Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[4] It first appeared, words and melody, in the second edition of William Thomson's book of Scots songs, *Orpheus Caledonius,* published in London in 1733, just in time to catch the wave of enthusiasm for "Scotch songs" which was breaking over the English capital at the time. Shortly afterward it appeared in words-only form in the fourth volume of Allan Ramsay's immensely successful *The Tea Table Miscellany*, but the next step was an interesting and extremely important one: it appeared in Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765, where we find not only the words (the same set found in Thomson and Ramsay) but an extensive and quite informative headnote giving the historical background of the ballad, mostly taken from William Robertson's recently published *History of Scotland.* Then in the second edition of 1767 "The Bonny Earl" was followed by "Young Waters," whose headnote is as much about "The Bonny Earl" as it is about "Young Waters." We today tend to view the *Reliques* as a reference work or sourcebook, forgetting that Percy wrote it to be read—and God knows it *was* read, being arguably one of the most important literary works of the late eighteenth century, even one of the cornerstones (can there be more than one cornerstone?) of the whole Romantic Movement. It was a work of *literature* in which ancient poetry was carefully polished and set in the context of learned prose explication. Print was its performance medium, and if that performance isn't an almost seamless combine of informative and commemorative discourse then I'm Lady Wardlaw. That format was to prevail in collections by men like Scott, Finlay, Gilchrist, Cunningham, Motherwell, Chambers and Aytoun all through the first half of the nineteenth century. Which brings us at last (would you believe it?) to Francis James Child.

Between 1857 and 1859, Child, then in his early thirties and a Professor at Harvard, brought out an eight-volume collection in this same "Percy and others" format entitled *English and Scottish Ballads* that could have been the collection to end all collections of this type, combining as it did readable and authoritative introductions with accurate texts.[5] However, since it was written as a contribution to a huge set of over sixty volumes entitled *British Poets* that was probably aimed at the burgeoning public library market, it was necessarily pitched to an audience of readers, not fellow scholars. And young Child,

having already published a monumental edition of Spenser, was already very much a scholar with a scholar's decided instincts.

He had compiled his collection, as he said in his Preface, "from the numerous collections of Ballads printed since the beginning of the last century,"[6] but almost immediately he was dissatisfied with it, as he made clear in a letter to the Swedish ballad scholar Svend Grundtvig:

> Ever since I attempted an edition of the English and Scotch ballads, I have had the intention of making some day a different and less hasty work. I had at the time neither leisure nor materials, and as you, better than anybody, could perceive, but a very insufficient knowledge of the subject. The collection was made as a sort of *job*—forming part of one of those senseless huge collections of *British Poets.*[7]

What chiefly bothered him was that he had been forced to work from other people's *collections*, not from the original sources, the manuscripts on which these collectors drew, and he spent the rest of his life both gathering and studying those manuscripts and finally publishing the results of that study in his magnum opus, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-98), a work that was as far beyond his earlier work as the work of Thomas Percy was beyond that of Allan Ramsay.

There is no need here to give a full review of Child's tremendous influence on ballad study, but if people like Thomson and Ramsay can be said to have given ballads a wide distribution amongst a reading and literary public and Percy to have given them true literary respectability, Child can be said to have assured them a place in the Groves of Academe. No self-respecting college literature text would ever be without a selection of ballads (usually annexed to the medieval section, unfortunately), and ballads even entered the literary *canon* , becoming standard anthology stuff. Arthur Quiller-Couch included more than a dozen ballads in his *Oxford Book of English Verse* (1900), for instance, and that was probably due in no small part to the tremendous influence of Francis James Child and his work.

But perhaps most important, at least for most of us present, through that same man's influence ballads came to be accepted as a legitimate arena for scholarly research and publication. Child died in 1896 and never saw his great work completed, nor, perhaps, could he have even imagined the rich harvest his planting was to result in as his student and collaborator George Lyman Kittredge carried his work on. Child felt that the ballad was a "closed account" like the medieval romance and for all practical purposes his collection contained what there was to be contained. Kittredge's students and colleagues were to show that here in the New World ballads were still very much alive and still being sung, breaking them forever from the literary mold going back to Percy that I have been discussing. That format—the commemorative discourse supplied by the "folk," the informative by the scholar in his study—is no longer enough. We have learned to want the folk's informative context as well.

We may have gone beyond Child, but in no way have we left him behind. For all of us in ballad study, whether we think of him as the Old Man of the Mountain or the Man from Sinai's slope, he is our "only begetter" and we, his scholarly and intellectual get, are here today to pay him tribute.

Notes

1. "Folklore as Commemorative Discourse." *Journal of American Folklore* 105 (Fall 1994), 404.
2. MacEdward Leach, *Folk Ballads and Songs of the Lower Labrador Coast.* (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada Bulletin No.201, 1965), p. 9.
3. Leach., 10.
4. The entire history of this ballad and the events behind it are covered in Edward D. Ives, *"The Bonny Earl of Murray": The Man, The Murder, The Ballad* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press; and Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1997).
5. Francis James Child, *English and Scottish Ballads.* 8 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1857-59).
6. Vol. i, p.vii.
7. Hustvedt, 246. Grundtvig was in the process of compiling his great collection of Danish ballads, and he had already published a set of translations of British ballads. See his *Engelske og Skotske Folkeviser* (Copenhagen: Wahlske Boghandlings, 1842-46).

The Contributions of Francis James Child to Folklore and Literary Studies

Barre Toelken

My comments will be necessarily brief because I have not made a fair study of Child and his work from a folklore perspective; as a medievalist, I first used Child's great collection the way any literary scholar might employ an archival resource: as a compendium of reliably gathered and rigorously edited materials for study and interpretation. In the 1960s, as I worked on a doctoral dissertation on poetic aspects of balladry, I began to realize that the style of texts found mainly in printed form was quite different from that of ballads that had been shaped by a substantially oral existence. As I tried to account for this variance, I found myself drawn farther and farther from Child's printed materials and closer to the live texts being collected by fieldworkers. We all used Child's numbering system, to be sure, but those of us who were developing interests in semiotics, metaphor, structure, and the like found that texts from oral tradition offered us richer material. Indeed, many ballad scholars of my generation complained that Child had been needlessly antiquarian—that he preferred older printed versions in archaic language to fresher oral performances in modern vernacular. It seemed to many that he eschewed field collected texts, especially from contemporary singers in the United States, and thus depended too heavily on the idea that older versions somehow presented a more genuine articulation of what the original ballad might have been like. Now, as any close reader of Child's notes knows, these concerns are not entirely groundless; but they are not borne out in any extreme way, either. In any case, I think it is pointless to complain that Child was not using our up-to-date folkloristic methods and perspectives; he was pretty much in the mainstream of those concerned scholars who began forming the American Folklore Society in the 1880s: they believed that folklore—at least of the orally transmitted sort—was dying out, and they were all trained in the study of printed texts. So we could say that Child's

impact on what we today call "folklore" was minimal because he did not know it the way we do.

But on the larger framework of cultural and literary studies, I believe Francis James Child exerted one of the greatest intellectual influences of his era. He promoted the idea of comparative literary study and sought to account for all possible pieces of the ballad puzzle in all languages available to him. Tied to that, he fostered the notion of a cultural heritage among the vernacular cultures of northern Europe—one not derivative of the great classics of Greece and Rome (whose works he had also mastered at an early age). In focusing on the voices of the non-elite creators of European balladry, and in urging their inclusion in the literary canon, he began a revolutionary process which is still in motion today: the insistence that literary culture is not limited to a few printed classics, and that literary creativity does not necessarily move from the top of society downward. Literary scholars trained at Harvard and influenced by Child and his ascerbic successor, George Lyman Kittredge, changed the picture of literature and the way it was taught in the United States: by the 1960s, virtually every U. S. university had a ballad course, and practically every high school and middle school literature textbook had a ballad section. Albert B. Friedman's *Viking Book of Folk Ballads of the English-Speaking World* (1956) became an early paperback favorite and eventually appeared as a Penguin classic. It seems clear to me that for a period of about a hundred years, Francis James Child had influenced the content and direction of literary study.

By the 1990s, a little more than a hundred years after the appearance of Child's masterpiece, there are few ballad courses being taught at universities (though other vernacular and ethnic creations are still being urged into the canon of important works), and Friedman's book is out of print. Perhaps we should ask ourselves to assess the comparative impact *we* have had on this field. One promising development, one I think Child would have appreciated, is the growth of an international ballad commission. Originally organized under the auspices of the *Société internationale d'ethnologie et de folklor*, it now exists as an independent entity, made up of scholars throughout the world who believe in comparative scholarship and in the importance of the vernacular voice. But among them I think there is no one who can compare in stature and depth with F. J. Child.

DIANNE DUGAW

"ALL THE RICHES THAT WE BOAST CONSIST IN SCRAPS OF PAPER"
ENGLISH BALLAD TRADITION AND EMERGENT CAPITALISM IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

London. Summer of 1720. New words of finance fly about the town from parlor to pub, from Whitehall to Bartholomew Fair: "credit" and "commerce"; "public fund," "debentures," and "national debt"; "insurance" and "investment"; "shares," "scrips," "notes," "bonds," "gains," and "stocks." The South Sea Bubble, part of the first international market crash of investment stocks, is a notable moment in history. With it the Early Modern World slips below the horizon, and our Modern World of venture capitalism comes into view. Some three dozen contemporary popular ballads refer to the South Sea Company and respond to the crash of 1720. Through them we glimpse people at the "ground floor" of finance capitalism coming to terms with—quite literally—new configurations of value and power, of material exchange and relationships. A familiar, popular form that circulated on paper as did the stocks themselves, ballads capture a world of transforming epistemology and shifting social and material relations. As one ballad, "The Stocks: or, High Change in 'Change Alley describes:

> . . . Butchers, Barbers, Cobblers, Taylors,
> Painters, Parsons, Clerks, and Gaolers,
> Leave their Counters, scorn their Trade, Sir;
> Fortunes here are sooner made, Sir.
> *Doodle, doodle, doo, &c.*
> Here for *Time* they're selling, buying;
> Some refusing; some complying;
> If in Payment there's a Flaw, Sir;
> They're above the Reach of Law, Sir.
> *Doodle, doodle, doo, &c.*[1]

What do such songs tell us about the event and the emerging capitalist investment economy it signals? In the South Sea Bubble we recognize key aspects of the modern order. International relations, government policy, trade, business, finance, and war all intersected with emerging institutions and a new interdependence among them. Likewise a modern-seeming party politics reverberated through the decade from the founding of the South Sea Company in 1711 to the financial crisis of 1720. In unprecedented ways, public opinion, rumor, and publishing shaped the participation of an increasingly involved and self-aware bourgeois citizenry. At each stage, ballads tell the story.

The South Sea Bubble

The events of the South Sea Bubble of 1720 began with the founding of the South Sea Company in 1711 amidst complex negotiations to end the War of the Spanish Succession. In this long conflict (1701-14), England, the Dutch Republic, and the Holy Roman Empire battled on land and sea against France and Spain. Nominally the war was fought over monarchical succession: the Bourbon Philip V assumed the Spanish throne, grandson of Louis XIV of France, who recognized the exiled "Pretender," James Stuart, as King of England rather than the reigning Queen Anne (1702-14). More pointedly, the dispute involved control of global trade and colonization. Founded amidst the treaty debate over the latter, the South Sea Company was a cartel of English merchants and financiers chartered with royal and parliamentary approval to carry out the provisions for English trade with Spanish America—notably the slave trade authorized by the *Asiento*—which reached their final form in the Treaty of Utrecht that ended hostilities in 1713.[2]

In hindsight, the founding of the South Sea Company looks questionable from the start because the enterprise lacked a solid basis for growth. Embedded in domestic party politics, the Tory-aligned company consisted of financier creditors to whom the government was in considerable debt for funding the decade-long war. These bankers and domestic manufacturers of wartime supplies, as it turned out, had little knowledge of the commerce between Europe and the Americas by which they, as a trading company, might have raised working assets. Nor was this the only hindrance to the enterprise. In addition, by the time the Treaty of Utrecht reached its final form in 1713, Spain's diplomatic negotiators had severely limited the commercial provisions of the settlement that ended open warfare with Britain. Moreover, by 1718 hostilities again broke out between the two countries, halting what little trading the South Sea Company had begun in the few years after the treaty.

By 1719 sanctioned trade with New Spain stopped completely. The South Sea Company turned to speculative stockjobbing—the buying and selling of investment stocks—in connection with a scheme to consolidate the national debt.[3] (In fact, the South Sea Company seems never to have been as seriously committed to international trade as it was to profit-generating conversions of government annuities and other debts into salable assets.) Authorized by the Crown and Parliament, the South Sea Company began to convert some £50 million of government debt into marketable company stock shares. In an escalating process, financial speculation quickly lost any mooring to solidly grounded projects or deliverable goods as newly "capitalizing" investors rushed to sell shares in one insubstantial investment scheme in order to buy shares in another. As Sandra Sherman has observed, the South Sea Bubble, like the US Savings and Loan scandal of the 1980s, "exposed brilliant and ruthless financial manipulation, unbelievable incompetence, and a relationship between government and business that depended on bribes and insider trading."[4]

At the start of the process, the South Sea Company generated substantial profits. Manipulating stock values and bribing key players at parliament and court (including royal mistresses and probably King George I himself), the company directors inaugurated their scheme of exchanging South Sea Company stock certificates for government obligations

at the same time that they sold shares of new stock at inflated prices. In the early months of 1720 the public responded with a frenzy of stock purchasing in London and between London and the financial centers of Amsterdam and Paris. With an exploding market of investment ventures—insurance and building schemes, proposed inventions, fishing and trading companies, and so on—people clamored to buy and sell investment shares of all kinds. Amidst this demand, stock values rose wildly in the spring, reaching a peak in the summer of 1720. However, by August, parliamentary moves to regulate the marketing of stocks and foreign withdrawals of investment triggered the collapse of the expanding "bubble." By autumn of 1720 the crash came amidst a ministry shakeup and an official cover-up that resembles almost uncannily such late 20th-century incidents as the Iran-Contra scandal or the savings-and-loan buyouts.

Ballad Tradition in the Early Eighteenth Century

Francis Child would have found much to protest in this consideration of South Sea Bubble ballads, for these songs and their singers do not at all fit his "traditionary" criteria for ballads as "the manifestation of the whole people, great and humble . . . living in much closer relations than now."[5] Indeed, these thirty-some ballads would be perfect candidates to provoke one of his sizzling dismissals of printed songs as "dark heaps" of "worthless literature."[6] But, as many have proposed over the past century, popular ballad tradition is intricate, dynamic, and multi-layered in ways that did not engage Child's regard. Moreover, as the ballads on the South Sea Company demonstrate, the "English and Scottish Popular" ballads that Child fancied, demarcated, and attended to actually interesect on all sides with social and cultural contexts that he restricted from his definition of the "popular." Indeed, questions of social class and of the rubrics "popular" and "polite" are revisited when we look at the South Sea Bubble and the songs that people sang about it. Ballad tradition is reconfigured by these ballads.

In general, popular songs functioned more variously and more pervasively in the eighteenth century than they do now. Songs today are primarily entertainment or ceremonial forms, more likely lyrical than narrative, imaginative than documentary. Diverting us from the "real business" of our daily lives, they bring us together in communities of taste and, to a greater or less degree, heritage. Eighteenth-century songs like the topical ballads considered here had additional functions. More integrally tied to events, ballads were journalistic, both informing people about the news of the day and satirically commenting upon it. In ballads of the early modern era a single form combines four separate media in our culture: (1) popular songs intended to entertain; (2) journalism in newspapers, magazines, radio, and television that is meant to inform; (3) political cartoons that lampoon and satirize people and happenings; and (4) stand-up comedy routines that likewise ridicule, rail, and laughably comment on various matters. Ballads on affairs surrounding the South Sea Bubble served an increasingly involved citizenry whose very participation was giving rise to the new economic order.

Who composed, circulated, and sang such ballads as "The South Sea Whim,"[7] "The Raree Show Ballad or the English Mississippi,"[8] and "The Broken South Sea Taylor's Ditty"[9]? We must turn to the upper- and especially middle-classes, people musically literate enough to fancy ballads accompanied by printed tunes (as a number were), and moneyed enough to pay for the engraved (rather than woodcut) sheets that such notation required. These new ballads about stocks and investment schemes thus stand somewhat apart from the long tradition of broadside ballads pitched by publishers to humbler singers in the trading, artisan, and working classes. Such cheaper woodcut sheets with words-only carried news of more tangible and more conventionalized troubles in their narratives of bloody murders, battles, and shipwrecks; sad leavetakings between departing sailors and their sweethearts; monstrous births and apparitions; and bawdy pranks by or on clever serving maids. By comparison, broadside ballads on the South Sea Company and the Bubble of 1720 cater to buyers from a higher social level who, hearing the songs in a theatrical or coffeehouse performance, buy the sheets to sing and hear the songs again accompanied by their own viols, keyboards, and flutes. Such singers and purchasers from the ruling and business classes were precisely the players who were winning and losing in the newly fashioning economic system of projected value, paper money, and speculative investment.

Most of the "Bubble" ballads remain anonymous. However, some half-dozen names that survive suggest the authors, audience context, and community in which these songs circulated. Two phases of the unfolding South Sea Company story especially sparked ballad comment from onlookers and participants: (1) the founding of the company amidst the treaty negotiations leading up to the Hanoverian succession, from 1708 to 1714; and (2) the frenzied speculative stock trading of 1719 followed by the crash and government coverup of 1721. The identities of a handful of paid professionals—party satirists and Grub Street authors—come down to us together with a few literary names from the aristocratic and investment classes. Both categories of writers—middling and genteel—composed ballads for the two chapters of the story.

In the first phase, politics and party dominate the telling of events. Most ballads voice satirical Whig opposition to the founding of the company. Whiggish satire viewed the venture as part of the political agenda of Tory Lord High Treasurer, Robert Harley, who aimed to shift power away from the Whig-dominated Bank of England and East India Company by the creation of the Tory-backed South Sea Company. Such satirical songs—some paid for, some volunteered by interested players—were published anonymously. Most remain so. Known authors include Daniel Defoe, whose ballad-writing and party pamphleteering would soon give way to the writing of such famous fictional "histories" as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*. The genteel Arthur Mainwaring is also identified. A member of parliament and favorite of the Duchess of Marlborough, Mainwaring is described by Frank Ellis as the Duchess's "informant, advisor, co-conspirator, collaborator, confidant, and accompanist on the harpsichord."[10]

Defoe's ballad, "The Age of Wonders" of 1710, satirizes—in his famously ironic style of parodic exaggeration—the Tory position on such issues as the military command of Marlborough, the dynamic between Queen and parliament, and of course, credit and the national debt. To the familiar strains of "Chevy Chase," a traditional tune that appears time

and again in songs about the South Sea Company and events around its founding, Defoe's ballad sings with mock-heroic irony:

> The Bankrupt Nation to restore,
> And pay the Millions lent;
> We'll at one dash wipe out the Score,
> With Spunge of Parliament.
> Then we can carry on the War,
> With neither Fund or Debit;
> And Banks shall eat us up no more,
> Upon pretence of Credit.
> If not, we'll close with Terms of Peace,
> Prescrib'd by *France* and *Rome*;
> That War, being huddled up Abroad
> May then break out at home.[11]

Typical of ballads from this time, Defoe's "Age of Wonders" circulated anonymously on printed broadsides and sparked several retorts before it reappeared in the company of like-minded ballads in *Pills To Purge State Melancholy*, an anonymous compilation of satirical ballads published in several volumes and editions from 1715 to 1718.[12]

At this first period of South Sea Company history some ballads—for example, "The South Sea Whim"—explicitly depict the founding of the South Sea Company as the key piece in Harley's scheme to alleviate the war debt and solidify Tory rule. Other songs supply a vivid portrayal of the context for its founding in the trade and credit disputes at home that were linked to the peace negotiations abroad. Referring directly or obliquely to the company, ballads sing out a cavalcade of reports and responses to developments in the succession dispute (with James, the Stuart claimant, on one side and George and the House of Hanover on the other), and the rumored machinations of Harley, Bolingbroke, Abigail Masham the favorite of Queen Anne, and others at court. Focusing on the intrigues of parliament and court, the songs—especially from the distance of two-and-three-quarter centuries—capture the political tension surrounding events and policies, and the rumors about them.

Set to longstanding tunes from seventeenth-century street balladry, the ballads from the years of the founding of the South Sea Company routinely satirize—usually from the Whig side—specific incidents or strategies (including finance) and key players in state affairs. Such songs as "Credit Restored," "Mat's Peace, or the Downfal of Trade," and "The Merchant a-la-mode" target particular people and actions along the lines of Defoe's ballad.

Written by and for people close to parliamentary and diplomatic events, ballads from this first phase typically invoke the heroic themes and resonance of earlier popular ballads such as "Chevy Chase" to effect a mock-heroic "send-up" of the people and policies that are their targets. This moment of attack and counterattack represents a localized community of singers—most of them closely tied to the government—engaged in a brief if avid tradition of satiric songmaking.[13] This community of political partisans and party satirists associated popular ballads—albeit by means of parodic reversal—to concepts of heroic value and

behavior that would continue to shape ballad collecting and scholarship through the nineteenth century.[14]

The climactic phase of the South Sea Bubble history is the speculative bubble and crash, which followed the brokering of stocks in 1719 and plans to manage the debt along the lines of John Law's so-called "Mississippi" scheme in France. This moment is important in the ballad history of the event because of the shift to a wider, more popular audience. Songs from this later period of 1719-21 convey the perceptions of a general public rather than the disputes of party politicians. These ballads are both more theatrical and "aesthetic," and less pointedly satirical and political than those from the earlier phase. Such ballads as "The English Mississippi" and "The South Sea Ballad, Set by a Lady"[15] emphasize social changes: the capacity of stock profits to overturn rank and station almost overnight. They also—with some perplexity—observe the shift to a world whose values, institutions, and stability rest upon pieces of paper with agreed-upon and manipulated worth.

The ballads of 1719-21 speak to a broader audience: women as well as men, from a range of classes; to a degree, the songs are addressed to workers and tradespeople, and certainly depict them. While the songs did not circulate on the streets on the woodcut broadsides popular among the lowest ranks, they did appear in such widely accessible venues as the stage, public fairs, and book stalls. For a whole new audience—many of the lower and middling sort—the South Sea Bubble prompted a taste for singing satires and laments about "stocks," "ventures," "scrips," "shares," and "credit."

Individuals of a literary inclination in or close to the governing or investing class—Arthur Mainwaring, Jonathan Swift, and Alan Ramsay, for examples—commented upon financial and political occurrences in both phases of the South Sea Company history.[16] Anne Finch also exemplifies this literary group, aristocratic poets—probably unpaid—roused to comment by events around them. Her "Stock-jobbing Ladies" satirizes the giddy social mixing at the height of the Bubble in 1720.[17] Such moneymaking afforded a new independence to women who here lay aside their fashionable "ombre" and "basset" cards for the new "games" of buying and selling stocks. Finch sees the ladies pursuing wealth by the new forms of "gaming" in dubious company indeed. Images of games mixed with puns on financial terms (here "divide" and "share") are typical in ballads about the South Sea Company, especially those referring to the bubble.[18]

> Ombre and Basset laid aside,
> new Games employ the Fair:
> and Brokers all those Hours divide,
> which lovers us'd to share....
> With Jews and Gentiles undismay'd,
> Young tender Virgins mix;
> Of Whiskers nor of Beards afraid,
> Nor all their cousening Tricks.

"The Stock-jobbing Ladies" foregrounds the anti-semitism that runs through South Sea Bubble songs. Both reflecting and shaping popular perceptions, the ballads emphasize shifting social relations identified by culture and gender. The number of Jews—Spanish-speaking Sephardi, in particular—apparently did increase in London financial circles in the

first decade of the eighteenth century.[19] But they were never more than a small minority in South Sea Company transactions (usually 5-10% of subscribers)—albeit a culturally conspicuous one.[20] Even more noticeable, between 1710 and 1720 women increasingly appear on the subscription lists.[21] Finch's ballad responds to this new world of "stock-jobbing ladies," while it takes up centuries-old gender motifs and anti-semitic traditions.

Indefatiguable songsmith and playwright to five sovereigns, Thomas D'Urfey (1653-1723) supplied one of the most widely known of the Bubble ballads. His "Hubble Bubbles" or "The Hue and Cry after the South-Sea" picks up threads of Whig satire from the earlier Treaty of Utrecht period to continue to remind people of the party politics embedded in South Sea Company history. D'Urfey set his text to "O'er the Hills and Far Away," a commonplace tune for anti-Jacobite ballads mocking James Stuart, Catholic claimant to the throne during the 1715 uprising after the succession of George I. D'Urfey's ballad thus conjures the political history of the South Sea Bubble even as it critiques the stock trading of 1720. ("O'er the Hills" continued to serve as an allusion to the Jacobite/anti-Jacobite conflict well into the eighteenth century, appearing with new ballads about "Bonnie Prince Charlie's" uprising of 1745, the last Stuart threat to the House of Hanover.[22])

"Ye Circum, and Uncircumcis'd,/ Come hear my Song and be advis'd," "The Hubble Bubbles" begins.[23] D'Urfey's ballad fixes immediately on the social transgressions that Finch's song brought up—with a possible gender twist of its own since being "uncircumcised" is a category that includes women as well as Gentile men. A variant of the ballad reframes this preoccupation with Jews, adding "Turks" to the intermingling categories at the stock trading coffeehouses, suggesting that the new trading poses an even more complex blurring of ancient separations: "Jews, Turks, and Christians, hear my Song."[24] A mélange of caricatured purchasers lists a whole range of formerly excluded groups. "Now Purchase in if you be Wise," D'Urfey facetiously enjoins listeners: "Scotch men," "Irish who have Bulls to sell," "privy Councellors," "Nymphs of Gay desire," and "Italian Songsters."[25] In the transforming values of paper stocks were seen deep-seated shiftings of power, and place.

Surveying such typical investment proposals as "the Fishery hubble bubble," "Insurance of Ships," "Project for Emptying . . . Houses," and "Insurance from Fire," D'Urfey's ballad ends with the commonplace bursting of the delusive, metaphoric bubble and a popular final pun on the word "Stocks":

> A bubble is blown up with air,
> In which fine Prospects do Appear,
> The Bubble breaks the Prospects lost,
> Yet must some bubble pay the cost,
> Hubble bubble bubble hubble all is smoke
> Bubble bubble hubble bubble all is broke
> Farewell your Woods your Houses Lands your Pastures
> And your Flocks.
> For now you have nought but your Selves in ye Stocks.

D'Urfey crowds onto the penultimate line of the resonant little tune a nostalgic list of landowners' losses—"Woods," "Houses," "Lands," "Pastures," and "Flocks"—from a world

of land-based wealth that is slipping away. "The Hubble Bubble's" last alliterative sentence underscores the metamorphosing of value and relationship that is creating a capitalist world of striving individuals: "For *now* you have *nought* but your *Selves* in ye *Stocks*." On the tune's unresolving final note, D'Urfey leaves us with the playfully numerical pun on the word "nought": "now" = "nought" . . . 0.

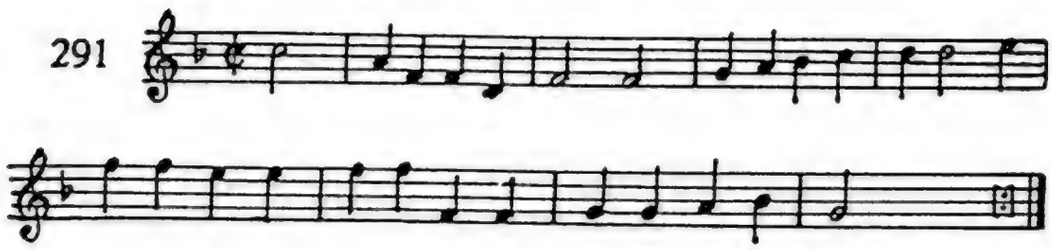
In this uncadencing cadence, D'Urfey's song figures forth in the singing both the floating insubstantiality of this new value of "nothing" as well as an apprehensive lack of an end to its tune.

Bubble Ballads, Paper Value, and Emergent Capitalism

At the height of the trading in 1720, Grub Street author, Ned Ward penned "A South-Sea Ballad, or, Merry remarks upon Exchange-Alley Bubbles." Ward's ballad concludes with the following stanza:

> Five hundred Millions, Notes and Bonds,
> Our Stocks are worth in value,
> But neither lie in goods or Lands,
> Or Money let me tell ye.
> Yet tho' our Foreign Trade is Lost;
> Of mighty Wealth we Vapour,
> When all the riches that we boast
> Consist in Scraps of Paper.[26]

One of the ballad's tunes, "London is a Fine Town," ends, like "Over the Hills and Far Away," with another pointedly unresolving cadence that opens out into a seemingly unmoored new world of paper finance:



In layer upon layer of figuration Ward's text to "A South-Sea Ballad" gives a troubled—if witty—rendering of the dissolution of materiality and stable resolution. His ballad punningly concludes by rhyming "Paper" with "Vapour." Using the archaic verb "Vapour" as a gaseous figure (typical in Bubble songs), Ward captures people's anxious cognizance of shifts in the organization and meaning of economic value. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) gives two meanings for the verb "vapour" in Ward's pun: "1. To pass in a vapour, or fume; to emit fumes; to fly off in evaporations" and "2. To bully; to brag."[27] Both meanings reverberate here: a bullying boast, which doubles as "fumes," an image of immateriality that popularly connoted farting. A satiric commonplace, the image of farting—certainly an intended reference for Ward's "vapouring"—voiced the fixation on transformations of the material into the immaterial that pervades the songs and stands at the center of the South Sea Bubble's historical importance.[28]

Amidst this newly configuring world order, people responded with heady dreams and apprehensive worries. Ballads like Ward's fretful "Merry Remarks" apply to the South Sea Bubble recognizable reactions, warnings, fears, and questionings. As "A Lady" declares in her "South Sea Ballad" (1720): "This Gold sanded Ocean is not like the rest/ but is quite of a different Nature possest."[29] In response to the South Sea Bubble, ballads took up new concepts and modes in familiar terms: mock-heroic parodies of satirized ministers; images of longstanding ethnic rivalries and prejudices; conventional gender, occupational, and class caricatures; traditional biblical tales, moral warnings, and proverbial wit; and so on. Ballads also brought key features of this newly capitalizing and speculative world of value into public parlance.

An adaptable, cross-generic hybrid, ballad tradition supplied a pre-existing form that was perfect for "digesting" this transformation of power and decision-making. Indeed, ballad sellers and buyers had already done their own "vapouring," for ballad tradition reinvented itself in the seventeenth century by the paper commodification of its oral forms. Printed broadsides and chapbooks transformed song traditions, bringing traditional forms and themes to a new paper medium geared to individual consumption and projected value. Moreover, from the beginning, the paper broadsides functioned journalistically in this community of reading, purchasing singers: to announce and comment upon recent events.[30]

A "tragi-comical farce" on the stocktrading of 1720 notes the new sway of "information" in a world refashioning its structures, relationships, and values by investment and stockjobbing. *Exchange Alley: or, the Stock-jobber turn'd Gentleman; with the Humours of our Modern Projectors. A tragi-comical face. Humbly inscrib'd to the Gentlemen daily*

attending at Jonathan's Coffee-House depicts—with a standard moral critique—the dynamics of the trading at the coffee-houses in Exchange Alley. Opening with a song conventionally preoccupied with the mingling of castes, the scene goes on to propose a new function for bulletins of such long-familiar images of disaster as ship-swallowing monsters: the encouragement or discouragement of an investing public.

Enter Cheat-all Singing—

Some rise, and some fall,
The Devil and all,
All Fools here their Fortunes may try,
The Prospect is gain,
They ne'er can attain,
Like Gamesters at Hazard and dy.
The Turk, and the Jew,
And Priests not a few,
The Country, the Town, and the C—t;
Here Ladies and Peers,
And some without Ears,
To Cheat, and be Cheated resort.

Cheat. Hoop Peticoat, Bubble, who gives Seventy-five per Cent?
1st Brok. I do.
2d Brok. I do—
3d Brok. I'll give One Hundred.
Cheat. You have it—Hempen Halters.
1st Brok. I'll Buy—your Price?
Cheat. Fifty per Cent.
1st Brok. I'll give it.
Other News Cryers run a-cross the Room in Confusion.
1st News Cr. Great News from Muscovy!
2d News Cr. Great News!—Strange and wonderful News!—A true and surprizing Account of a great and terrible Whale, that swallows up whole Fleets of Ships at Sea.
(The Stock-Jobbers immediately look dejected.)[31]

This scene of avid stocktraders turned suddenly downcast poses a new role for late-breaking and accurate information: its effects on projected markets, trading, and value. At the same time, the satire highlights the dangers of such unfounded rumours as this "true and surprizing Account." After all, as anyone in 1720 would have recognized, this "terrible Whale" of famously landlocked Muscovy is just such a fantastical fiend as appears and reappears among the cruel murders, dreadful disasters, farcical courtships, devilish apparitions, and monstrous births conventional in popular printed ballads. In the satire of *Exchange Alley*, the new stock-jobbing order turns on longstanding delusions of popular fancy now invested with a ridiculous power to sway the foolish of all ranks. The new economic scheme is a paper rumor of wealth built upon such stories as circulate on paper ballad broadsides. For the critiquing author of *Exchange alley*, neither have credibility except to the gullible.

The paper broadsides themselves had transformed song traditions in the seventeenth century, reconfiguring relationships of material to immaterial, individual to community, fact to imagination, signifier to signified. Songsheets in hand, singers reimagined the meanings of songs and song communities even as they sang, read, and wrote their traditions into new forms. Like stock tickets and paper currency, the ballad broadsides signal a world of projected value as pieces of paper marked with words and tunes (or titles of tunes) projected for buyers incipient or potential songs to be brought into actual being in future performance after the purchase of the songsheet. Aptly, ballads take up the South Sea Bubble, apprehensively responding to events and meanings of this irrevocable new world. There was no turning back.

On the brink of the twenty-first century we face an analogous transformation of value in our "bubbling" credit of plastic cards and cyber-banking. And so we find ourselves digging up records and remnants of the South Sea Bubble and the emerging capitalism it signalled.[32] In the 1990s we can appreciate the musing of a street-level balladeer who sang of the flight to Europe of Robert Knight, Secretary of the South Sea Company. Fleeing Britain with no small amount of cover-up money and all the company's records, Knight remained abroad, officially banished and screened from inquiry, until 1742. Of these dealings and intrigues, a proverb-laden ballad remarks in January of 1720/21: "A Bites but a Bite Sir, all the World over,/ 'Tis a long Pudding [that is, a sausage] that has not an End."[33] At this distance, the proverb rings ambiguously. The dream of the South Sea Company came to its end; but the "pudding" of capitalism itself continues. Looking on from the streets, this lowerclass, woodcut ballad sings:

> Ye fools in Great-Britain, repent in your Folly
> Bewailing the Loss of your Money and Lands,
> Unto your vexation, 'tis fled from the Nation,
> And Blockheads and Ninnies have got it in hand
> Lament not your Folly, for now 'tis too late
> It is sunk in the Ocean as they do pretend,
> A Bites but a Bite Sir, all the World over,
> 'Tis a long Pudding that has not an End.[34]

Notes

1. From *The Stocks: or, High Change in 'Change-Alley*, an undated broadside "Sold by all the Print and Pamphlet-sellers in London and Westminster," Harvard University, Houghton Library, Bute Broadside Collection, C90.

2. For accounts of the South Sea Bubble incident, see P.G.M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England* (London: Macmillan, 1967); John Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble* (London: Cresset, 1960; rev. ed., Phoenix Mill, Far Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton, 1993); John Sperling, *The South Sea Company* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, 1962); and Larry Neal, *The Rise of Financial Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chaps. 4 and 5. For recent literary studies that discuss the event, see Colin Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Catherine Ingrassia, "The Pleasure of Business and the Business of Pleasure: Gender, Credit, and the South Sea Bubble," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 24 (1995), 191-210, and Sandra Sherman, *Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

3. The English plan of 1719 to reduce the national debt followed upon a related scheme undertaken in France under the counsel of John Law. This even more sweeping consolidation plan came to be known as "the Mississippi Bubble," and the two stock marketing phenomena quickly affected each other as investments moved between the two, and both crashed more or less together. See Dickson, Chapters 5 and 6, and Neal, pp. 70 ff. See also Thomas Kavanagh, *Enlightenment and the Shadows of Chance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), Chapter 3, and Peter M. Garber, "Famous First Bubbles," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 4 (1990), 35-54.

4. Sherman, 20.

5. Francis J. Child, from "Ballad Poetry," *Johnson's New Universal Cyclopaedia*, 4 Vols. (New York: A.J. Johnson, 1875-80), I, 366; reprinted in part in Dianne Dugaw, ed., *The Anglo-American Ballad* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995).

6. See his unsigned review of "Ballad Books," *The Nation*, 7 (Sept.3, 1868), 193. This essay with a companion piece is reprinted in Sigrid Rieuwerts, "F.J. Child and the Ballad Cause," *Journal of Folklore Research*, 31 (1994):27-34.

7. Broadside, Harvard University, Kress-Goldsmith 4721.17, "To the tune of 'To you fair ladies now at land'" (1711). On the tune, see Claude Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966), 647-51.

8. Broadside, British Library, H.1601 (348), with tune. See Simpson, 538-39.

9. Broadside, British Library, H.1601 (209), with tune, "sung by Mr Platt at Sadlers Wells." Bart Platt was a singer who performed in the 1720s and 30s in venues at Bartholomew Fair, Penkethman's and Norris's Great Theatrical Booth, Goodman's Fields, &c. See Ben Ross Schneider, Jr., *Index to "The London Stage 1660-1800"* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 669.

10. The quote is from Frank Ellis, ed., *Poems on Affairs of State*, Vol. VII (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), 307. Ellis' collection contains five ballads that refer to the founding of the South Sea Company and events surrounding it: "The Age of Wonders"—attributed to Defoe—462-72; "A Welcome to the Medal"—attributed tentatively to Defoe—491-503; "An Excellent New Song, Called, Mat's Peace, or the Downfal of Trade"—attributed to Mainwaring—pp.504-13; "A New Song. Being a Second Part to the same Tune of *Lillibullero*"—attributed tentatively to Mainwaring—539-44; and "The Country Squire's Ditty," 599-602.

11. "The Age of wonders," British Library 112.f.44(26). For text and discussion, see Ellis (462-72) who dates the ballad to September of 1710. On this ballad tune, see Simpson, 96-101.

12. *Pills To Purge State Melancholy*, 2 Vols. (London: R. Burleigh, 1716-1718).

13. This tradition of Augustan satirical song and verse is documented in George deF. Lord, General Editor, *Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714*, 8 Vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963-75).

14. Addison's discussion of "Chevy Chase" in *Spectator Papers* No. 70 and 74 (1711) certainly resonated with the political and financial context of the debates over the treaty and the royal succession, for the tune echoed through the streets and coffee houses carrying the words of one mock-heroic party ballad after another.

15. Broadside, British Library H1601(92), with tune.

16. Mainwaring is mentioned above (n.8). While I have not identified any of the ballads as being by Swift, several poems treating of the South Sea Bubble are known to be his. Two ballads in my collection are by Alan Ramsay,

17. Broadside, Harvard Kress-Goldsmith, 5898.79, with tune. The text to Finch's ballad appears in British Library, M.S. Lansdowne 852. Norman Ault attributes it to Finch in *A Treasury of Unfamiliar Lyrics* (London: V. Gollancz, 1938), 299.

18. For treatment of this theme, see Kavanagh, *passim.*

19. Carswell, 5.

20. Jewish creditors also had a presence because they held some of the biggest shares of stock during the early 1700s and maintained key trading connections on the continent, particularly in Amsterdam.

21. See Dickson, *op. cit.*, 267-68 and 281-83. On women investors, see Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class* (Berkeley and Los Angleles: University of California Press, 1989), 173 and Ingrassia, *op. cit.*

22. For discussion of the tune, see Simpson, 561-63. John Gay used the tune—fully relying on its implications—in *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), Air 16.

23. Broadside, Harvard, Kress-Goldsmith 5898.25, with tune.

24. Simpson, 562.

25. "Italian Songsters" of course is a sexualized reference to the *castrati* and other "queer" persons (as we would say) associated with the opera.

26. Broadside, British Library, H1601 (252), with tune. On the ballad and various tunes, see Simpson, 188. The tune "London Is A Fine Town" cadences on the unresolving dominant chord. As Simpson observes, the tune to which buyers are directed on other broadsides, does not really fit the meter of Ward's text.

27. Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: W. Strahan, 1755; rpt New York: Arno Press, 1979).

28. This focus in Augustan satire on the image of farting has its most famous expression in John Dryden's poem, "MacFlecknoe." However, the image is a commonplace and can be found in satiric works, from street ballads to Pope's "Dunciad."

29. From "The South Sea Ballad, Set by a Lady," British Library, H1601(92) (reprinted in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, 8:254-57.

30. On the history of broadside balladry as a form, particularly with regard to song traditions, see Dianne Dugaw, *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, 1650-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; rpt Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 15-90.

31. *Exchange Alley: or, the Stock-jobber turn'd Gentleman; with the Humours of our Modern Projectors. A tragi-comical face. Humbly inscrib'd to the Gentlemen daily attending at Jonathan's Coffee-House* (London: T. Bickerton, 1720), 26.

32. In the 1990s the South Sea Bubble has citations even at the popular level. Billy Bragg's 1991 compact disc *Don't Try This At Home* contains "The North Sea Bubble," a song about the collapse and capitalizing of the Soviet bloc. With obvious reference to the eighteenth-century, Bragg sings: "We're living in a North Sea bubble/ We're trying to spend our way out of trouble/ You keep buying these things, but you don't need them/ But as long as you're comfortable, it feels like freedom." (Go! Discs, Cat.No.828 279-2).

33. Though the format is a common one for proverbs in English, I have not found this expression documented exactly as it is phrased here. Clearly, it is linked to the proverb "Everything has an End and a pudding [that is, a sausage] has two." See Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), 186, E121. See also, G.L. Apperson, *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1929), 515, and Emmanuel Strauss, *Dictionary of European Proverbs*, 3 Vols. (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), I,440 (#487 Eng e).

34. Harvard, Kress Collection 5898.12.

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EDWARD D. IVES

"HOW GOT THE APPLES IN?"
INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY AND BALLAD TRADITION[1]

Way back in the beginning of things, almost a hundred years ago, Francis Barton Gummere not only wrote as good a description of the ballad as we've got,[2] he also asked a crucial if rather enigmatic question, and that question—probably partly because it was enigmatic to the point of being gnomic—caught my attention when I first read it almost half a century after it had been written: "How got the apples in?" It turns out he was quoting a humorous poem by John Wolcott (*aka* "Peter Pindar") in which King James, looking at an old woman's dumplings, wondered "How the devil got the apple in?" and Gummere used the allusion to raise the paired problems of the origins of the ballad genre in particular and the larger issue of the origins and development of poetic expression in general. What he did then was construct a curve of poetic evolution that began with ritual choral dance, moved on through epic, and ultimately soared to the heights of Lord Tennyson—that is, to what we now recognize as poetry proper. Along this curve, poetic concerns moved from the communal to the personal and authorship from the inspired group to the poet in his study—in general, then, following Herder, from the poetry of nature to the poetry of art.

As you might guess, the ballad belonged on the early slopes of this curve. Gummere never actually said that any of the ballads we have today were in fact composed by a singing, dancing throng, but they were not far from it, being clearly on the communal end of the curve. But there was the mystery—a third apple dumpling, as it were. "How," he asks, "does a song cross the gulf between this spirit of race, this latent community of sentiment, and the concrete fact of melody and words?"[3] And there the mystery remained, and it remained—and still remains—a mystery. He never could quite bring himself to say that there wasn't an individual poet in there somewhere, but even so, his theory demanded that that individual be so submerged in the inspired group that it was entirely meet, right, and even our bounden duty to say of ballads, as he did, that a people, not a poet, composed them. How got the apples in? Unfortunately, Gummere left us with an answer as enigmatic as his question.

Yet that answer, known generally as the theory of communal composition, was the accepted wisdom of the academy for half a century or more. It was taught to me as an undergraduate literature student and still ruled by the time I reached graduate school (1949). In fact, anonymity was cited as a ballad touchstone—if the author was known, it wasn't a true ballad—long after the theory underpinning it had been gleefully pretty well destroyed by Louise Pound and a host of later scholars. But the touchstone remained, and it is still useful. As a matter of demonstrable empirical fact, at least ninety percent of all ballads in Anglo-American tradition *are* anonymous, and any touchstone that will work nine times out of ten is far from silly. The silliness enters in when we insist on our ignorance—the fact that we can't identify the author—as a matter of basic definition.

Communal composition was slowly replaced by a theory of "individual composition/ communal re-creation," which holds that while the proto-ballad was of course created by

an individual, it became a true ballad only through being passed from singer to singer over time and through space. As early as 1932 Gordon Hall Gerould in his influential book *The Ballad of Tradition* described it as the process "by which both words and melodies keep continually changing, yet only very slowly become transformed into something quite unrecognizable as the same."[4] That last phrase takes the concept to its extreme, to be sure. I remember hearing Maud Karpeles say more modestly, though quite positively, that such change took a minimum of three generations, but in either case oral tradition itself is seen as an alembic through which an individual poet's work has to pass to achieve that essential whatness we might call "folksongness" or more specifically "balladness." In other words, when the apples go in they aren't apples at all; their appleness is the result of a transmutation. Frankly I've never seen that transmutation satisfactorily demonstrated for any particular ballad, but under any circumstances the emphasis is on a *communal process* working on an *already existent entity*. Little attention is paid to the initial act of creation that brings a *new* entity into existence. Although anonymity of authorship is not insisted on, it is seen as a normal by-product of extensive oral tradition. Put it this way: if a ballad hasn't been handed down long enough for the author to be forgotten, it probably isn't a true folk ballad anyway. Thus, the creativity and individuality of the original author counts for little or nothing; it is the tradition that was important.[5]

Interestingly enough, both the communalists and the re-creationists share two rather basic assumptions: first, that a ballad is a *text*, and, second, that the passing on of this text is a matter of memorization. The theory of oral composition (often called the Parry/Lord theory) assumes neither, claiming that a true oral poet, steeped in the language and formulae of his metier, recomposes his song each time he sings it: the moment of performance is the moment of creation. Thus the search for an original or an author is made moot; each version is original and each singer is its author. Developed through the exploration of Serbo-Croatian heroic song to shed light on Homeric epic, it is unquestionably the most exciting narrative-poetic discovery of the twentieth century. Within the epic genre I find it wholly convincing; in its application to the British ballad—and there have been several notable attempts at such application—I find it less so. The most positive verdict I can offer is that fine old Scottish one of "not proven." Besides, even if proven, its emphasis is again on the recomposition of existent entities, not the creation of new ones.[6]

For such creation, *ex nihilo* so to speak, I would prefer a theory based on data to be found within the ballad genre itself. Can we find traditional ballads we can take back not only to their historic but to their musico-poetic origins as well? Not many—so swift is Time the effacer—but there are some, and what I would like to do now is take one specific ballad—one single apple, as it were—as an exemplar of what I have learned. To put that briefly, the originator—the poet, not the process—is the true alembic in which experience and tradition are fused with something of the poet's own to form the new ballad. That ballad then gets passed on, and while subsequent singers almost certainly will alter its details, both its individuality and its "balladness" are the gift of its original creator.

Since all art begins with an artist, let us begin there too. Joseph William Scott was born in Lower Woodstock, New Brunswick, "on the banks of the Saint John," in 1867.

Temperamentally unsuited to farming, he left home as a young man for the lumberwoods of Maine, arriving just as the burgeoning pulp and paper industry was creating a boom in the woods that would equal anything ever seen when lumber was king. He settled in Rumford Falls, a raw paper-mill town and woods depot that had been carved out of the wilderness only a few years before he arrived, and he worked up and down the Androscoggin River, where he became known as a crack woodsman and river-driver and a great guy, a man among men—and among women. In 1894 he was jilted by a beautiful girl, and it marked him. Except for a few side excursions, he kept to the woods until that notoriously roaring life caught up with him, and he died in the Augusta State Hospital of alcoholism and syphilis in 1918. It was neither a happy life nor on the surface a very distinguished one, but around the turn of the century Scott made up about a dozen ballads that became part of the standard repertoire of traditional singers throughout the entire northeast. Even at midcentury I was able to collect more than two-hundred versions of them, and one of the best known was "Benjamin Deane."

The record shows that in May of 1898, one Benjamin Deane, proprietor of a small boarding house frequented by transient lumbermen, shot and killed his wife in Berlin, New Hampshire. The record also shows that the Androscoggin River log drive was passing through Berlin at that time, which means that Scott was almost certainly around town then. Besides, he knew Deane, probably having stayed at his boarding house. At any rate, as I say, he made a ballad about him, and not only do I have the original twenty-five-stanza printed broadside he sold around town and in the lumbercamps, I was able to collect over thirty traditional versions of it from all over Maine, New Hampshire, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, and the following, sung for me by Billy Bell of Brewer, Maine, is a perfectly representative one (I have omitted the tune, since, for the present paper, music is no part of the argument):

1.
Good people all both great and small, read these lines penned by me;
These lines were written by a man deprived of liberty,
Who is serving out a sentence for a deed that I have done,
And it's here I fear I will remain 'til my race on earth is run.

2.
My name is Benjamin Deane and my age is forty-one;
I was born in New Brunswick in the city of Saint John,
Nearby the Bay of Fundy where the seagulls loudly call
As they rock with pride on the silvery tide as the billows rise and fall.

3.
My parents reared me honestly, brought me up in the fear of God,
But long have they been slumbering beneath their native sod;
Side by side they slumber in a quiet cemetery,
Where the willows bow before the breeze from off the deep blue sea.

4.
Farewell unto my happy home, I ne'er shall see it more;
No more I'll watch the billows break upon its rock-bound shore.

No more I'll watch those ships go by with sails as white as snow.
Bound for some port far o'er the sea before the winds that blow.

5.
When I arrived in Berlin Falls some twenty years ago,
The town was then about one-half as large as it is now;
And laboring men of every nationality were there,
For work was plenty, wages good, each man could get a share.

6.
The businessmen of Berlin then were making money fast;
I thought that I too would invest before the boom had passed.
A building leased on Mason Street and into business went;
I kept a fruit and candy shop, likewise a restaurant.

7.
My business proved successful for I was beloved by all;
I gained the favor of the great, the rich, the poor, the small.
To my surprise, before a year had fully rolled around,
In glittering gold I did possess more than a thousand pound.

8.
The coming year I wed with one, the fairest of the fair.
Her eyes were of the heavenly blue and light brown was her hair;
Her cheeks were like the dawn of morn, her form graceful and fair;
Her smile as bright as morning light, her step as light as air.

9.
She was born of good parents and they reared her tenderly;
'Twas little did they ever think she would be slain by me.
The night I gained her promise and her hand to me she gave
It would have been better far for her if she lay in her grave.

10.
I own I loved my fair young bride, which proved a prudent wife;
'Tis little did I think that I one day would take her life.
But as the years rolled swiftly by upon the wings of time
I found the paths of pleasure had led to the fields of crime.

11.
I soon began a wild career caused by the thirst for gold;
My property on Mason Street for a goodly sum I sold.
I bought a building on Main Street, which cost a handsome sum;
I ran a free-and-easy house and went to selling rum.

12.
My fair young wife would often beg me my steps to retrace;
She told me that the path I trod led to death and disgrace.
Had I but heeded her warning I wouldn't be here now,
And she might still be living with no brand upon her brow.

13.
I soon began to associate with men of low degree,
And my business kept me constantly in their base company.
I quickly went from bad to worse, did many a deed of crime
That never will be brought to light in future years of time.

14.
My fair young wife then fled with one whose name I will not write,
Whose character was blacker than the darkest hour of night.
To persuade her to return to me it was my whole intent,
So to the house where she then dwelt my steps I quickly bent.

15.
I cautiously approached the house and opened the hall door;
I found the way to my wife's room upon an upper floor.
The sight that fell upon my gaze is stamped upon my mind,
For on the bosom of a man my fair wife's head reclined.

16.
The very fiends of hell it seemed my being did possess;
I drew a loaded pistol and I aimed it at her breast.
And when she saw the weapon 'twas loudly she did cry,
"For God's sake, do not shoot me, Ben, for I'm not fit to die!"

17.
The bullet pierced her snowy breast; in a moment she was dead.
"For God's sake, you have shot me!" were the last words that she said.
The trigger of that weapon either moved too fast or slow,
Or else another would have passed with her to weal or woe.

18.
The last time that I saw my wife she lay upon the floor,
Her long and light brown wavy hair was stained with crimson gore.
The sun shone through the window on her cold and lifeless face
As the officers led me away from that polluted place.

19.
I have two daughters living—they're orphans in a way—
And should you chance to meet them, treat them kindly I pray.
Don't charge them with their father's sin, for on them there will rest
A crimson stain long after I am mouldering back to dust.

[20][7]
[Come all young men, a warning take from this sad tale of mine:
Don't sacrifice your honor for the gold or silver fine.
Let truth and honor be your guide, and by them you will climb
Success the ladder to the top, and not be stung by crime.]

As I pointed out above, a ballad is a fusion of fact and tradition The first question to be answered, then, is "What are the facts?" Not so much "what really happened" (which is irrelevant to the creative process)) but what would he, Joe Scott, have known about the

incident at the time. Those are the raw materials he had to work with. I thought I had answered that question when I came across a rather complete and contemporary account of the murder in the *Berlin Reporter* At first glance, it looked to me like all Scott had to do was supply the rhymes, but a closer look showed many differences, and those differences lined up rather nicely with the gossip I was still able to hear sixty or more years later. The newspaper has the murder take place in a first-floor sitting room in the presence of two witnesses; the ballad moves it to Mrs. Deane's second-floor bedroom. The newspaper account has one of the witnesses, Jack Garland, wresting the gun from Deane and holding him down until the police arrive; the ballad casts him as Mrs. Deane's lover and claims he was lucky to escape with his life. The article's tone is condemnatory, showing Deane as a murderer pure and simple, having premeditated the crime; the ballad's tone is one of sorrow for a good man's downfall, a man who—for all his "life of crime"—went to bring his wife home but, blinded by rage at what he saw, shot her to death. All of this, as I say, goes along with the gossip: "He'd of killed Garland, but he gripped the gun too tight. . . . That Garland was a wild one, you know. . . . Nobody put all the blame on Ben. . . ." And so on.

My further investigations revealed other differences between the ballad and the documentary record. Right from the beginning Deane was in trouble with the law and just about one jump ahead of the sheriff. He was also a sick man, increasingly crippled with arthritis, and his troubles with his wife had a long, long history. All of this forms no part of the newspaper story, but all of it would have been, and was, common knowledge among those who knew Ben.

The indications are pretty clear, then, that Scott was working with what I'll call "barroom" or "hell-I-was-right-there" authority, with just a touch of the printed record, and he was very selective about what he used and what he left out. That selectivity was controlled by the artistic tradition in which he had decided to work: that of the murder ballad. Therefore, let's take a brief look at that tradition.

In the first place, simply deciding to make a ballad about a murder would have been a traditional act in itself. Malcolm Laws lists thirty-seven such ballads in his *Native American Balladry*, plus twenty-seven more that he felt were of doubtful currency in tradition, and I am sure that any ballad scholar can think of several others that aren't in Laws' canon at all.[8] As I say, a murder was prime material for the ballad-maker, and the form in which such ballads were cast was much the same everywhere. "The Wexford Lass" is a typical and widespread example, and here it is as sung for me by Dellas MacDonald of Glenwood, N.B., back in 1961:[9]

1.
As I was born in Sheffield, brought up to the high degree;
My parents reared me tenderly, they had no child but me.
Til I fell in love with a Waxford lass, with a dark and rolling eye;
I promised for to marry her, the truth I'll not deny.

2.
As I went to her father's house 'bout eight o'clock that night,
But little did this fair one think I owed to her a spite;

I asked her for to take a walk to view those meadows gay,
And perhaps that we might have a chance to appoint our wedding day.

3.
We walked along together 'til we came to rising ground;
I pulled a stake out of the fence, with this I knocked her down.
She fell down to her bended knee, for mercy she did cry,
"Do not murder me Jimmy for I ain't prepared to die."

4.
But I grabbed her by those yellow locks, I drug her on the ground;
I threw her into the river that flows through Waxford town:
"Lie there, lie there, my pretty fair maid, to me you'll never be tied;
You shall not enjoy my life or ever be my bride."

5.
Returning to my father's house 'bout twelve o'clock that night,
My father rose to let me in while striking up a light,
Crying, "Son, dear son,what have you done? What stains your hands and clothes?"
The answer that I made him was, "A bleeding from the nose."

6.
At first I asked for a candle to light my way to bed,
Likewise I asked for a handkerchief to tie around my head.
Oh the twisting and the whirling, no comfort could I find;
The gates of Hell wide open before my eyes did shine.

7.
About ten days later this Waxford lass was found
A-floating down the river that flows through Waxford town;
Her sister swore my life away without a word or doubt;
They took me up on suspicion for having this fair one out.

8.
So come all you true and lovers a warning take by me,
And do not murder your own true love, no matter whom she be.
For if you do you're sure to rue until the day you die,
For it's high upon the scaffold where you'll end your days and die.

The similarities with "Benjamin Deane" are clear: Both ballads use the same double-stanza form. Both use the first-person confessional mode. Both tell where the hero was born and how he was reared tenderly. Both foreshadow the murder with "little did she think" asides. Both heroines beg for life, claiming they're not prepared to die. And both ballads end by pointing the moral that others should not do as they have done.

But right there the similarity ends. Not only is the tone of the two quite different—"Benjamin Deane" being far more sympathetic to its hero—but the emphasis and sequence of events is just about reversed. "The Wexford Lass" gets right to the murder, then involves itself in the aftermath and consequences; "Benjamin Deane," after telling of Ben's origins, goes through his whole life, stage by stage: birth, childhood, coming to Berlin, opening a candy store, success, blesséd marriage, the thirst for gold, the "free and

easy house," the wife's departure, and then—and only then—the murder. "The Wexford Lass" is a lurid tabloid item; in comparison, "Benjamin Deane" is a novel or perhaps a confessional autobiography, and no other murder ballad I know of is anything like it.

The only ballad even remotely like it is the well-known "The *Flying Cloud*,"[10] a pirate saga following its hero from birth and tender upbringing through apprenticeship to a cooper, to running away to sea on a merchantman, to hiring on the *Flying Cloud,* first for a slaving voyage and then for a long and successful career of piracy, and ultimately to capture and impending death on the gallows, and since that ballad was well-known in the lumbercamps I am convinced it was Scott's model for "Benjamin Deane." But whether it was or not, it is worth pausing a moment to recognize—given the basic conservativeness of the tradition he was working in—the daring artistic innovation Joe Scott's ballad represents.

Even beyond its relationship to other murder ballads, "Benjamin Deane" shares both a prosody and a diction with other ballads in what we call the broadside tradition. Its double stanza, for instance, is by far the most common stanza form in that tradition, as standard for it as the shorter common-meter stanza is for the so-called Child ballad. As for diction, it shares as much as a third to a half its language—ranging from short phrases to whole lines, couplets and even entire stanzas—with other ballads. To the student of oral poetry, such formulaic language is the lifeblood of the metier, comparable to the Child ballad's "commonplaces" and the epic singer's "formulae" and "themes."

Go back to my alembic analogy, where I spoke of the artist fusing experience with tradition, and we have seen Joe Scott doing just that. I also said that in this transmutation the artist adds "something of his own." Call it individuality, call it style, it is what allows us to recognize a painting as by van Gogh, say, or a poem as by Dylan Thomas. We do not as a rule look for it in ballads because in this metier poets did their best work by not insisting on it. But occasionally it shows itself, and it certainly does in Scott's florid style. Take, for example, the second stanza. What is covered in one formulaic line in "The Wexford Lass"—"My parents reared me tenderly, they had no child but me"—Scott elaborates into a full stanza (#3) replete with willows and a breeze off the deep blue sea, and the Wexford lass's "dark and rolling eye" compares similarly to Ben's full four-line description of his wife in stanza 8.

Let me add here that this is not my personal judgment only. The community in which Scott's songs circulated also recognized it. More than once I was told "Joe loved to put in about the flowers and brooks and things," for instance, and even people who didn't know of Scott's authorship often claimed "Benjamin Deane" was a hard one to sing, meaning it was rather long.

All very well, yet that community's tolerance for inventiveness had its limits. As written and circulated on broadside, "Benjamin Deane" was twenty-five stanzas long; no traditional version of it is more than nineteen, and the average is more like seventeen, yet it is still thought of as a long song. What almost always gets dropped is a series of stanzas detailing Ben's financial and legal problems—stuff like this:

> All I possessed in real estate to my wife it was made
> Over in legal writing, when kind fortune's smile did fade.

> But her regard and love for me did gradually grow cold
> When she found my heart and soul were bound with glittering gold.

Or, worse yet, the following:

> Then under forty thousand dollar bonds I soon was placed
> To respect the laws of man that I had long disgraced.
> And then to add unto my many troubles that had come
> Were four indictments that appeared for selling beer and rum.

Scott devoted almost a quarter of his ballad to such material, but hardly any of it appears in the traditional versions. Of course, he is hardly the only author to have his work improved by sensitive editing. As T.S. Eliot had Ezra Pound and Thomas Wolfe had Maxwell Perkins, so he had a whole succession of singers who knew what they liked and what they didn't, what would go and what would not. In addition to this one rather radical excision, all kinds of variations took place at the word and phrase level, the sorts of thing that one expects to find as a ballad passes along in oral tradition. In both cases we can speak of "communal re-creation," but having said that I have to add that in the two or three generations I have been able to trace the ballad through, I find no evidence that that process works any true transmutation. Even after the rather radical pruning mentioned above, "Benjamin Deane" remains essentially what Joe Scott made it. The gift of whatness was given by its creator. I do not quite have the *chutzpah* to claim that *all* ballads must have been created in this way, that is by gifted individuals steeped in their chosen tradition, but given the bankruptcy of "communal composition" and knowing no satisfactory examples of "communal re-creation" having made a ballad out of a non-ballad, I find it very attractive, especially since I don't have simply to theorize about it. I've seen it happen.

Earlier on, I spoke of the Parry/Lord theory as "the most exciting narrative-poetic discovery of the twentieth century," and I don't mean to dismiss such a monumental work quite as cavalierly as I may appear to have done. Certainly much of what I have said about Joe Scott's creative process matches well with what oral epic poets like Avdo Mededovic are reported to have done, bringing together traditional elements in poetic form, save that Joe worked at his ballads over time rather than composing them in performance. But once his ballad had been created, it was a text to be passed on memorially by the community in which it is found.

But here I find myself on the verge of two usual mistakes: (1) Communities *qua* communities can do nothing; it is individuals within communities that do everything, and (2) "passed on memorially" is not as simple as it sounds. In my book *Lawrence Doyle* I said that "a song tradition is not carried on by a group but by individuals within that group who for one reason or another take a special interest in songs."[11] Some, not singers themselves, form that educated and critical audience that is largely responsible for the health of the arts in every culture. Others, the active performers, vary tremendously in the creative responsibility they feel for the material in their keeping. Some make every effort to preserve it exactly as it came to them; others are willing to make minor repairs and even do restoration work; while still others combine versions, switch tunes, add or omit stanzas as they see fit, and (like Joe Scott) even create new ballads out of old. Simple

memorization can in no way account for the variety of texts we find for any well-known ballad; it takes the combined creativities of what Eleanor Long called the perseverators, the confabulators, the rationalizers, and the integrators to come close to doing that.[12]

One final point. We tend to look at tradition as a kind of mortmain, the dead hand of the past, resistant to change, yet Joe Scott's ballads, for all their innovative qualities, were accepted and preserved. In fact they became an important *part* of the tradition out of which they grew. I remember asking one New Brunswick farmer if he knew any of the old songs. He wasn't quite sure what I meant, and I started to explain. "You mean songs like *Howard Carey* and *Benjamin Deane* and *The Plain Golden Band*?" he asked. All three were by Joe Scott, though he didn't know that. Had not an almost complete revolution in economics and technology made that song tradition moribund, it might have become possible to show how Scott altered it by offering new models, much as William Carlos Williams and Charles Ives altered *their* traditions. But the demise of the all-winter lumbercamp and the burgeoning of mass communications made that possibility moot.

And that's apples enough for one day.

Notes

1. Almost all the material of this chapter is covered in my book, *Joe Scott: The Woodsman-Songmaker (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1878)*, and the interested reader is referred there for more detail.

2. See particularly his *The Beginnings of Poetry* (New York, 1901), *Old English Ballads* (Boston, 1897), and *The Popular Ballad* (Boston, 1907).

3. Gummere, *Old English Ballads,* p.xxxvii.

4. (New York, 1932), p.165

5. The entire communalist/re-creationist controversy is extremely well covered in D.K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (New Brunswick, N. J., 1959), pp. 3-122.

6. See Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964). For two applications of this theory to British ballads, see David Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk* (London, 1983; reprinted Edinburgh 1997) and William Bernard McCarthy, *The Ballad Matrix* (Bloomington, 1990).

7. I have added this stanza from another version. It is an extremely common one.

8. G. Malcolm Laws, Jr. *Native American Balladry* Revised Edition (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1964), pp.190-210.

9. For other easily available examples, see Laws, *American Balladry from British Broadsides* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1957), p. 267 (P-35). See also pp. 104-122.

10. For easily available versions of this ballad, see Laws, *ABBB,* pp.154-55 (K-28).

11. (Orono, Me., 1971), p. 251.

12. "Ballad Singers, Ballad Makers, and Ballad Etiology," *Western Folklore* 32 (1973), 225-36. Included in Dianne Dugaw, *The Anglo-American Ballad* (New York, 1995), pp. 234-48.

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WHAT THE PARROTS TELL US THAT CHILD DID NOT
FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF BALLAD METAPHOR

The title of this paper is a bit misleading for at least two reasons; first, ballad parrots might not tell *us* anything, really, for when they speak it is to other ballad characters. Moreover, in one of the ballads discussed in this essay, the point is that the parrot does not speak at all. Perhaps a better (but more stuffy) title would have been "how cultural assumptions about parrots and an awareness of narrative contexts may tell us something about ballad singers' employment of the parrot image." But since ballad parrots usually do provide important perspectives on the narrative when they "speak" to ballad characters, I want to turn up their volume, as it were, so that we may "hear" and thus consider more fully what they have to say. Parrots were popular as house pets in Europe since the Middle Ages; they are mentioned in medieval German poetry and song, and they appear widely in art. They are sprinkled throughout the ballads of northern Europe. So if the only comment we can make about them is that they seem to function in the ballads as speaking birds, then we have not said a lot—much like observing that ballad horses seem to have the function of carrying ballad personages from place to place. Trusting that parrots have not fallen into the ballads by mere coincidence, I see no reason to view them simply as the live ancestors of our plastic yard flamingos; indeed, I believe there is persuasive evidence that a ballad parrot provides symbolic depth in addition to its use as a communicative device.

Secondly, I do not fault Child for not having enlarged upon parrots, for he did not have the opportunity to tell us much of anything about ballad symbol and imagery. We know of his commitment to textual integrity and historical accuracy; would he have provided us with literary insight about ballad imagery and metaphor to match his books on Spenser and Chaucer if he had lived longer? I would like to think so, for there is every indication he was struck as much by the beauty and power of ballads às by their historical importance.

I offer this paper, then, not to show that we know something that Child did not, but to suggest that our distance from Child is less fairly measured in years or information than in the nature of our analyses as we approach the textual treasures he provided for us. I think especially of the poetic and performative insights developed over the past few years by Flemming Andersen, Roger Renwick, James Porter, and Luisa del Giudice; the social, historical, and personal dimensions brought into focus by Diane Dugaw, Sandy Ives, Roger Abrahams, and Bill McCarthy; the structural dimensions discussed by David Buchan; the applications of ballad and folksong theory to contemporary music by D. K. Wilgus and Neil Rosenberg; and the promise of continued analytic vitality lurking in the papers and discussions offered at forums like the conference at which the original version of this paper was read. I hope Child would have been pleased to see all this; probably "stunned" would be a better term. Could he have foreseen, for example, that an obscure group called the Kommission fuer Volksdichtung (also referred to as the International Ballad Commission), which in the 1970s could enjoy after-conference drinks around a single table in a Freiburg

cafe, would now in the 1990s number over two hundred members, distribute both a real and a virtual newsletter, participate in several websites internationally, and organize an annual international ballad conference? Even George Lyman Kittredge, Child's precocious acolyte, would not have imagined that a hundred years after the great scholar's death someone in Indiana would actually spend money to bring active ballad scholars together in Child's name, for Kittredge's biographical eulogy—printed at the front of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*—suggests that even colleagues of his own era knew little of Francis James Child's greatest work.

We know the ballad corpus and the ballad field now better than anyone did 110 years ago; therefore, we may go into metaphorical detail in this area without derogation to Child's comparative silence on the matter. I say "comparative," for Child did after all note the common occurrence of birds in the popular ballad, and provided a careful overview of their functions in his "Index of Matters and Literature" in the last volume of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. Typically, he noted, the ballad bird carries a message, comments on a murder, warns someone of danger, reveals a secret: that is, the bird does not play a central dramatic role, but rather supplies an insight, a commentary, an emotional or moral dimension, to the main action in the plot. One ballad, "The Earl of Mar's Daughter" (#270), does have a bird character—in that the lover is a dove by day and a man by night; though it echoes Celtic symbolism and apparently has Scandinavian parallels, it exists essentially in one English language version (and at that, I can find no confirmation of ongoing circulation in oral tradition). In any case, in this instance the main character actually changes into a bird, and this appearance is quite different from the overwhelming majority of ballad birds, who remain birds while commenting on the action. The question I want to pursue here is: what are they saying, and why?

That many of these birds are referred to as *parrots* may indeed be—as Child and others have suggested—an exercise of naturalism, or a rationalization of the talking bird motif so common in Europe and the Middle East (and, I think, almost everywhere). But the possibility that the parrot might have a more complex relation to ballad meaning has apparently not been discussed at length. Bronson finds the appearance of the parrot in "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight" (#4) quite superfluous, and comments that "it performs no office essential to the plot" (Bronson, 1969:54), while Holger Nygard considers the scene anticlimactic and unheroic (Nygard, 1958:283, 285). Wimberly treats ballad parrots generally as leftovers from ancient beliefs about the bird-soul, and not as integral to ballad plots (Wimberly, 1928:44-52).

Similarly, while it is clear that the parrot in "Young Hunting" (#68) is more intimately connected with the plot action, its function is still usually described simply as witnessing what has happened and threatening to tell about it. Here, the implication is that the murder story itself could have omitted the parrot-witness without changing the essentials of the plot. Yet, as I have argued elsewhere, parrots do not simply tattle on ballad murderers in general; they cling rather stubbornly to particular ballads. The parrot scenes in #4 and #68—in which a female character tries to control a parrot's speech with the promise of a golden cage—are indeed anticlimactic, in that they occur after the climax of both ballad plots, but they mirror and extend the ballads' meaning so richly that they cannot be

shrugged off as superfluous. In fact, a close look at the parrots may provide grounds to counter Bronson's comment that these two ballads have continued to be sung long after their meanings have eroded (Bronson, 1969:165-166).

Peter von Matt, in *Verkommene Soehne, Missratene Toechter: Familiendesaster in der Literatur*, notes that birds, especially turtledoves and parrots, were used throughout Europe in Medieval and early Renaissance popular and folk literature as images of erotic possibility. Birds are signs of open sexuality in medieval German poems like *Helmbrecht.* In English slang, a "bird" can refer to a young woman (particularly with sexual overtones) as well as to a penis (and compare: "to give someone the bird"), as well as to the act of having sex, as in the song "Three Maids a-Milking," where the man tells the woman:

> Now come along with me
> Down to yonder shady tree
> I'll catch thee a small bird or two.

The Dutch verb *vogelen* means both "to bird," and "to have sexual intercourse." In his chapter on "The Semiotics of Sexual Liaisons" in *English Folk Poetry*, Roger Renwick discusses at length the metaphorical and metonymical functions of birds in amorous folksong contexts, and suggests that an image of activity like:

> The lark in the morn she rises from her nest
> And mounts in the air with the dew on her breast

not only creates a suggestive parallel to the human actors, but as metonymy may actually depict the act of intercourse itself (Renwick, 1980:54-112). And in *Morning Dew and Roses* I have commented on the way such evocative bird images appear recurrently in poetic constellations including water and horses (Toelken, 1995:35-39, 132, 135). Here, I want to bring the erotic possibilities of bird imagery together with the specific nuances of the parrot, and show how they echo and intensify central issues in the plots of Child #4 and #68. For ready reference, I will provide a text of each which I collected from live ballad singers, but the reader is reminded of the necessity to check the range of versions available in the standard collections.

"The Outlandish Lad" (Child #4, "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight"), sung by George Jensen at Logan, Utah, June 10, 1957; Jensen had learned the ballad from his grandmother, a Mormon pioneer.

> There come an outlandish lad from the north land
> a-wooing unto me,
> saying "if you will follow me to the north land
> then I will marry thee.
>
> Go bring me some of your father's best gold
> and some of your mother's best fee,
> and two of your father's best nags in the stable
> where there stand thirty and three."

She brought him some of her father's best gold
and some of her mother's best fee,
and two of her father's best nags from the stable
where there stood thirty and three.

She mounted on to the milk white steed
and he on the dapple grey;
they rode til they come to the salt, salt sea
six hours before it was day.

"Mount off, mount off that milk white steed
mount off, mount off," cried he
"For six kings' daughters I've drownded here,
now the seventh one you shall be.

And I pray you take off that fine silken gown,
take off that gown," cried he
"For it is too rich, too rare and too fine
to rot in the salt, salt sea."

"Well if I must take off my fine silken gown
I pray turn your back unto me,
for I think you are too great a rogue
a naked woman to see."

He turned his back all on to her
then she begun for to weep;
then she grabbed him around his middle so small
and threw him out into the deep.

He tossed up high and he floated low
until he came up to the side,
saying "Pull me out, my pretty fair maid
and I will make you my bride."

"Lie there, lie there, you false-hearted man
lie there, lie there," cried she;
"For six kings' daughters you've drownded here
now the seventh one's drownded thee."

She mounted on the milk-white steed
and led the dapple grey;
she rode til she come to her father's own house
three hours before it was day.

"Don't prittle, don't prattle, my pretty Polly,
don't tell no tales on me,
and your cage will be lined with the glittering gold
and locked with an ivory key."

"Lovin' Henry" (Child #68, "Young Hunting,"), collected from Joannie O'Bryant, October 11, 1961, at Eugene, Oregon. O'Bryant learned it from Allie Long Parker of Hogscald Hollow, Arkansas, a few years earlier.

"Light down, light down, Lovin' Henry," she cried,
"And come stay all night with me.
There's a chair for you and a chair for me
And a candle a-burnin' free."

"I can't light down, Lady Margit," he cried,
"Nor stay all night with thee,
For my lonely little girl in the Arkansas land
Will wait long for me comin' home."

So he leaned down over the horn of his saddle,
and he kissed her one, two, and three.
She took a sharp knife all out from her side
and she wounded him wide and deep.

"Ride on, ride on, Lovin' Henry," she cried,
"and ride on beneath the sun,
and your lonely little girl in the Arkansas land
will wait long for you comin' home."

"But I can't ride on, Lady Margit," he cried,
"nor ride on beneath the sun,
for can't you see my own heart's blood,
a-trinkalin' down doth run?"

Some taken him by his lily-white hand,
some taken him by the feet,
and they throwen him in to the dark river side
that runs so still and deep.

"Lie there, lie there, Lovin' Henry," she cried,
"til the meat rots off of your bones,
and your lonely little girl in the Arkansas land
will wait long for you comin' home."

"Fly down, fly down, little parrot," she said,
"and come perch upon my knee.
Your cage it will be made of the fine beaten gold
and the bars made of ivory."

"I won't fly down, Lady Margit," he cried,
"nor perch upon your knee,
for I just seen you murder your own true love—
you'd kill a little bird like me."

"Oh, how I wish I had me a new cedar bow
and an arrow to fit my string:

I'd shoot you right through that neat little breast
that looks so bright and green."

"But you ain't got no new cedar bow,
nor an arrow to fit your string,
so I'll perch right here on the topmost branch
and bitterly I will sing."

In Child's #4, "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight," here titled "The Outlandish Lad," the usual plot introduces a stranger who promises marriage, convinces a young woman to bring him some horses and property belonging to her father, and then rides away with her, ostensibly to his country (whether he is a magical elf-knight or not is probably irrelevant to this discussion—in any case, it is not a major factor in most of the versions). We can infer from references within the ballad that their departure takes place at night and is not announced to her family. We usually find out in mid-ballad, when they reach the seaside or a deep riverside, that she is not just any young woman, but royalty. At the same time we, and she, learn that she's about to be murdered:

"Mount off, mount off that milk-white steed,
Mount off, mount off!" cried he.
"For six kings' daughters I've drownded here,
Now the seventh one you shall be."

Adding embarrassment to this threat, he asks her to disrobe, and she requests that he look away; in other versions she asks to pray; or she asks him to cut the nettles near the brim so her hair won't get tangled when she goes into the water. When he turns away, she grabs him around the waist and throws him into the sea. When in some versions he begs her to pull him out, promising to marry her if she will, she responds with punning irony, using a twist on his own words:

"Lie there, lie there, you falsehearted man,
Lie there, lie there!" cried she;
"For six kings' daughters you've drownded here,
Now the seventh one's drownded thee."

Note the rhetoric and the vertical imagery in these two stanzas: in the former, he commands her; in the latter, she commands him. In the former, he orders her to *get* down; in the latter, she orders him to *stay* down. His former command of the situation is replaced by hers; instead of being "brought low" by him, she has been able to bring him down. The effect on the audience, I presume, is a sense of relief that the innocent (naive) near-victim has given the would-be villain his just desserts. But this is a relief that results from the narrow logic of the plot, not from our personal opinions about whether murder in self-defense is justified or about whether an abusive person should be given a second chance. Certainly I never expect to discover a version of this ballad in which a parrot speaks up and says "Can't we all just get along?" followed by the rescue of the embarrassed young man and the eventual happy marriage of the couple. No. This ballad has to do with—among

other things—the justifiable elimination of a predator, and not with an inadvertent blunder during a normal courtship.

When the heroine—and by now she is one—reaches her home (remember, this is presumably a castle) it is still dark, and she has a chance to get back into her quarters without her parents realizing anything about her close call. But there's the parrot; what if the parrot tattles on her? In some versions the parrot demands to know what has happened to that young man she was with last night; in others she herself initiates the conversation and makes the first move toward bribery—in the form of a golden cage with an ivory key. In the more articulated scenes, the conversation becomes complex: the king wakes up and demands to know why the parrot is talking. The heroine promises the golden cage (quietly, one presumes), and the parrot tells the king:

> The cat she came to my cage-door,
> The thief I could not see,
> And I called to fair May Collin
> To take the cat from me.

The heroine in some versions promises then to make good on her offer; in some, she later tells her parents exactly what happened. In most American versions I have heard, the ending is very sparse, containing only a promise like:

> Don't prittle, don't prattle, my pretty Polly;
> Don't tell no tales on me;
> And your cage will be lined with the glittering gold
> And locked with an ivory key.

What does this ending mean in terms of the ballad action? As far as simple communication goes, it means that the would-be victim is safely back in her parents' house without having to worry about punishment for having run off, having endangered her life and virtue, and having potentially been lost to her father's royal family. But why couldn't the potential tattletale be a younger sister or a servant?—they abound in other ballads. What does a parrot offer to this scene that a nosy sister would not? And why wouldn't an earnest bribe offer something a parrot would like—such as great food or even a companion parrot?

For one thing, the parrot (potentially suggestive of sexuality) being saved from a predator who was "a thief I could not see" is certainly parallel to the heroine's situation. The endangered king's daughter is now back in her castle; the parrot is in a cage (and has the promise of an even better one). Both are single, potentially vulnerable actors protected from predatory intrusion by the proverbial idea (which I shall enlarge on later) that "safety is better than freedom." Clearly, the cage (its gold and ivory of much greater value to humans than to parrots) is far more than a convenient bribe: it is a metaphor for a human condition within a culturally constructed set of values.

In Child #68, "Young Hunting," here titled "Lovin' Henry," the bird interchange appears in most versions, occupies several verses, and occurs earlier in the action. A young man visits his sweetheart, and she invites him in, explicitly to spend the night with her and to enjoy her hearth and hospitality. He refuses, saying he must visit another lover; he leans

over his saddle and gives her a kiss, and she takes out her penknife and stabs him. In some versions he does get off his horse and comes inside or goes with her to a tavern, where she gets him drunk and stabs him. Sometimes with the assistance of her servants, she throws his body into a river or a well. In some versions, the murderer then invites a parrot to come down to her—usually in the same phrasing she had previously used to invite Young Hunting to get down off his horse; the parrot answers that he's afraid she will do the same to him as she did to Young Hunting; she responds by threatening to kill the parrot with her bow and arrow. In other versions, the parrot appears and accuses her of the murder, vowing to make the facts known to others; in some versions the parrot reveals the murder, the location of the submerged body, and the identity of the killer. In virtually every case where she tries to get the parrot to come to her, the lady offers a golden cage. In this ballad we have the familiar vertical imagery (a man on horseback is asked to light down and is later thrown down into the water; the parrot is commanded to fly down).

Arguing that "The inadvertent mixture of ballad narratives in oral transmission occurs most naturally if one narrative suggests another" (285), Nygard felt there was good reason to believe that the parrot scene was borrowed from "Young Hunting" by singers of "Lady Isabel." Interestingly, citing "corruption," Coffin and Renwick (1977:67) reach the opposite conclusion: that the parrot stanzas from "Lady Isabel" "have attached themselves" to "Young Hunting." I would like to propose that a close comparison of these two ballads shows that

a) they are not very similar in meaning despite some parallel details, and
b) that the employment of the parrot image is so closely tied to the *differences* in meaning that its appearance in these two ballads indicates not corruption, but an ongoing mastery of plot nuance by many of the singers who have sung them.

In both ballads, a woman kills a man and throws him in the water, but the logical and situational aspects of each ballad are quite distinct—even though there are some fascinating similarities in conceptualization. For example: in Lady Isabel, the woman is enticed by the man to *leave* her residence, and by going out and away she moves to a location where she is more vulnerable and he is less so (I'm assuming here that at home she was secure, and he—as the intruder who could have been caught—was vulnerable). In "Young Hunting," the woman entices the man to come *into* her residence to a location where she is less vulnerable and he is more so, as those versions in which he does come in make abundantly clear.

In "Lady Isabel," while she is vulnerable, the man (who is now in command of the situation) becomes aggressive; in "Young Hunting," while he is vulnerable, the woman (who is now in control of the situation) becomes aggressive.

In "Lady Isabel," the woman kills the man in what can only be called self-defense; in "Young Hunting," the woman kills the man in a fit of anger and jealousy. Both women taunt the man, once he's down, by repeating his earlier words with an ironic twist, which suggests he was asking for his fate. In both texts used here, interestingly, the ironic phrasing occurs in a verse that begins "Lie there," which signals both the vertical superiority of the woman and the lying perfidy of the man.

In "Lady Isabel," the man is a seductive liar and murderer and would seem to be—at least according to present-day standards—eligible to be killed in self-defense. The man in "Young Hunting" is more of a cad than a bodily threat; in his rude and cavalier rejection of his lady-love's invitation (my other girlfriend will get lonely waiting, or—in one version—"my true love is prettier than 10 of you") he certainly does not project a positive character, but whether that makes him eligible to be killed for offensive chauvinism seems not so clear.

There are some contrasts between the women as well. Neither of them seems to be playing with a full deck (one runs off with a total stranger in the middle of the night; the other murders her boyfriend over a snub). In "Lady Isabel," the woman begins and ends the story under her father's roof—at least by inference a position of gendered dominance, safety, sexual control, dependence. In "Young Hunting" she is in her own house and not under male control; she is sexually free, independent, and in control of events. Lady Isabel, not described as an aggressive person, saves herself by killing a man; Lady Margit, who starts out romantically aggressive, ruins herself by killing a man (at least in those versions where she is burned for her deed).

There are differences in the parrots, too. In "Lady Isabel," the parrot is in the house, in a cage, physically under control, and needs only to be persuaded that the lady's best interests—and the parrot's own fortunes—lie in not revealing her adventurous close call to her father. In "Young Hunting," the parrot is outdoors, not in a cage, not physically under control, and apparently acts on the assumption that it is in the murdered man's best interests to have the truth come out. One parrot conceals a murder, and the other reveals one. In those versions of "Lady Isabel" where the caged parrot is figuratively rescued from a predator, the parrot is directly parallel to the female character in the story. In "Young Hunting," the free-flying parrot is made expressly parallel to the ballad's male victim, both by parallels in wording ("Fly down, fly down . . . and perch upon my knee" being directionally analogous to "Light down, light down . . . and stay all night with me" —as well as rhyming with it) and by dialog (in many versions the parrot actually says "What you did to him, you'd do to me"). Moreover, in revealing the murder and the victim's whereabouts so his family can find him, the parrot clearly is acting on behalf of the victim's interests, not the killer's. In "Lady Isabel," it's the *potential* of speech that interests us (and we wonder "what if the parrot does tell the truth?"), while in "Young Hunting" it is the reverse ("what if the parrot does not tell the truth?"). And in both ballads, the offer of gold and ivory to a parrot drives home our awareness that these images are addressed to human, not aviary, issues.

Thus, it seems to me that these parrots function very much like the iconographic birds and parrots in the Flemish and Dutch genre paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries—especially with regard to their common illustrative association in Dutch emblems and in proverbial expressions throughout northern Europe with the cliche "safety over freedom," which appears in numerous prints and engravings of caged parrots by Jacob Cats, P. C. Hooft, and Roemer Visscher—often with the label: *voor vryheyt vaylicheyt* (instead of freedom, safety). In Dutch painting—for example in the works of Jan Steen—the inference is more general: a bird or birds *in* a cage suggest marital or family harmony,

proper social order, and praiseworthy behavior, while cages without birds, or cages on top of which a parrot or owl perches, almost always appear in scenes of unrestricted revelry, disorder, and erratic behavior. Used in paintings of young, unmarried women, the domesticated parrot suggests (along with the act of sewing—another familiar ballad commonplace) the properly socialized, obedient, well-behaved, productive woman, as Wayne E. Franits so well illustrates in *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (1993:21, 25, 81). Franits quotes a Jonker Livinus van der Minnen: "I saw the green parrot /hanging in the parlor,/Although he was caged,/ He spoke beautifully. . . ./And he was so cheerful in his prison/ as if in a wedding house. . . ." (82), and notes the common practice of using such emblems on three levels simultaneously: an amorous interpretation leads to a social one, and the two together conduce to a spiritual one (204). That such complex "commonplaces" were not limited to the Dutch realm is clear from English chapbook tradition as well: for example, John Gay's *Fables* (1727) includes a piece called "The Scold and the Parrot," in which a husband lectures his wife about slander, drawing a parallel between the unbridled speech of a woman and the sexual content of a parrot's language, and pointing out that

> "A parrot is for talking priz'd,
> But prattling women are despiz'd."

How I wish I could now make a direct connection between these paintings, the proverbial emblems, and the two ballads discussed here, especially since "Lady Isabel," long considered one of the most widespread of all European ballads, appears to have originated in the Flemish area. But those of you who are well acquainted with the ballad and its textual pedigree will already know that—alas—the parrot does not appear in any of the Flemish or Dutch ballad variants available to us. If I were fifteen years older (and could therefore get away with it), or if this were the 1930s (when everyone could get away with it), I could posit a lost or unrecovered text—an Ur-ballad from which the eroded (shall we not say "corrupt"?) Dutch and Flemish variants descend, but whose earlier and more complete features have been preserved in English and Scottish versions by the conservative processes attendant to peripheral distribution.

But I wouldn't really try it anyhow, for as tempting as that end-run might seem, it would lead us away from what I consider to be a bigger issue. More rewarding for me than the seductive hunt for sources and ballad genealogies is the more immediate issue of how ballads establish their meanings in the live contexts in which they are actually sung. We know that ballad variation need not be viewed as erosion or corruption, for we know of numerous ballads which have continued to develop, grow, and branch out; plenty of instances where ballads have been vastly improved through the variations introduced by talented singers. For example, I think we can comfortably make the case that "The Streets of Laredo" and "St. James Infirmary Blues" cannot be fairly called "corruptions" of "The Unfortunate Rake"—because they've not only stayed alive, through adaptive creativity, but they have palpably improved in poetic articulation. The three verse "Babes in the Woods" is astronomically better than its maudlin 40-verse ancestor; and the dialogue introduced

by American singers into ballads like "The Gypsy Laddie" and "The Sweet Trinity" are ample proof that ballad meanings and nuances continue to emerge and develop.

Thus, it should not disappoint us that all versions of "Lady Isabel" or "Young Hunting" do not use parrots. The question is, where the parrot *does* appear, what is it doing there? And if, as I've suggested, the parrot image functions differently in these two ballads, then I think there is good reason at least to challenge the notion that one simply borrowed the motif from the other because the singer wanted a talking bird, or that the green parrot and golden cage were so attractive through time that they were retained by singers without any particular role in maintaining the ballad's coherence. As is the case with the commonplaces discussed by Flemming Anderson, these recurrent images are full of *potential* meaning, and their application in a ballad is based on a range of attitudes, conventions, customs, and culturally constructed assumptions shared among the group who sing and hear them (Anderson, 1991:25). Focused by particularized ballad contexts (courtship, hunting, seduction, kidnapping, war, and so on), these highly distilled images of customary meaning operate very much *like* the commonplace images in the Dutch paintings, in that they combine culturally situated meanings with the nuances of the ballad drama (what's going on in the picture) and provide us a visual emblem or icon through which the quality of the action is deepened and more fully dramatized in a concrete way.

What art historian Svetlana Alpers says of the emblems in Dutch iconographic paintings is exactly what I want to say about these traditional images in ballads: "They are by their very nature commonplaces, examples of shared rather than of arcane wisdom. . . .[T]he images are easily grasped, couched as they are in the actions, dress, and domestic settings of . . . society." (Alpers, 1983:230) "It is not a notion of hidden meanings that produces such works, but rather the notion of a world that is understood in terms of an assemblage of visibly accessible meanings" (233).

Conclusion

As I have worked with the orally transmitted ballads, I have become more and more convinced that they are not adequately characterized by the term "narrative." At least, they seem to me to be not so narrative, in the sense of conveying a linear series of events, as they are dramatic enactments of highly charged human moments of crisis, frustration, triumph and despair. For example, the ballad "Edward" (Child #13) does not tell a story *about* a young man who has killed his brother, but enacts a heavily charged scene in which a mother learns of the murder of one son by the other by ironically having to pull the information forth from the reluctant culprit. Highly dramatic enactments like these depend largely on shared customary understandings among the audience for a sense of depth and shared meaning, for the traditional ballad text itself seldom provides overt commentary. Indeed, for me, this is one of the sharpest stylistic differences between the oral and the printed ballads, whose texts fairly beat the audience about the head and shoulders with information, commentary, and moral interpretation. And, as is so often the case with orally transmitted "texts," most of the richest meaning resides not in the manifest ballad wording

but among the audience's shared sense of cultural propriety and "normality." Rather than merely telling a story, the text "triggers" a culturally constructed set of responses.

Our ability to see how appropriately a small motif like a parrot can articulate culturally assumed values about fine points of human behavior should lead us to a new appreciation of the poetic talents of ballad singers and audiences. In the two ballads discussed here, women kill their male companions; yet in one case the murder seems justified. In fact, it doesn't even seem like murder because the young woman must do whatever she can to preserve her own life. We, the audience, know that her suitor is really a murderous abductor, and when he promises to behave if she will only pull him out, we silently hope she won't be so stupid as to believe him. We want him dead, and we feel relieved when she finally gets safely home without further incident. She's learned her lesson. Let her be. Go to sleep, Dad; and, Parrot, mum's the word. But this is only one set of options; interestingly enough, the ballad does not even suggest other equally interesting alternatives, such as, for example, praising the heroine openly for ridding the local scene of a man who has murdered six other women. Why is she not depicted as claiming a victory instead of smothering her triumph in secrecy through a cheap bargain with a caged parrot? Why is it worth it to the story to have her get back into her "cage," her father's castle, without letting her father know she has been out and about and has had the wit and strength to vanquish a would-be murderer? Because, I think, the ballad is an eloquent dramatization of a very precise cluster (and a well-known one by now) of gendered assumptions. As Polly Stewart has illustrated so well (Stewart, 67-69), such ballads may have more than one set of codes embedded in them: for the culturally conservative singers and audiences, the young woman's adventure in "Lady Isabel," while dangerous, ends in resolution for the culture. All's well that ends well; the "bird" is back in her cage. For many women singers and listeners, however, we may suspect that the song dramatizes a subordinative construction in which even a heroic act must be kept quiet because it was accomplished outside acceptable contexts, in which a woman being threatened by a man may win out through wit and dexterity but should not expect either help or praise as long as she's not in her place. Far from a merely colorful decoration for the action, the parrot in the gilded cage is the epitome of what this ballad is about.

In "Young Hunting," on the other hand, although we don't much like the young man for his insulting remarks, at least he's honest about his other liaisons; he hasn't claimed he's late for church or has to visit his mother in the nursing home. To the contrary, his lady's sexually mature and open invitation is given a mature and open answer. He deserves some comeuppance for his stupid remark, but is death a normal option in his culture? His lady's hyperbolic response is akin to the modern danger of making a gang signal while driving in traffic: it results in overkill. In "Young Hunting," I think we're taken aback by the severity of her response, and we're likely to agree with the parrot that she's destructive and dangerous. Just as we empathize with the parrot who covers for the king's daughter when she escapes her attacker and resumes her place in the castle in "Lady Isabel," we side with the parrot in "Young Hunting" when the lady so sweetly but menacingly promises a golden cage if he will only make himself parallel to the murdered man. And our suspicions are confirmed when indeed she threatens to kill the parrot for not obeying her—just as she did

Young Hunting. The interlude with the parrot allows for a further dialectic about the very morality and propriety on which the ballad's impact is based, and it does so in a visual, iconographic way that triggers both personal experience and culturally-situated assumption about women living alone (out of the direct control of men) and making seductive overtures. Culturally, she's a loose cannon on one level, and her discovery and punishment (which are detailed in some versions of the ballad) provide a culturally acceptable retribution, or a resolution to what Renwick has called the semiotic transgression (Renwick, 42-43). For some men, the fiercely and murderously jealous woman may function as a dramatized stereotype of female hysteria, while for many women singers and listeners, there is very possibly an encoded drama about men's faithlessness, the dangers of a woman initiating sexual liaisons, and the deadly finality of love gone awry—complete with the suggestion that no matter what happens, someone will see, take the man's side, and "sing" about it.

Could these ballads be sung without the parrot? Of course. But in some versions, the visual and dramatic dimension provided by the parrot enhances and deepens our sense of the possible range of meaning, and it does so in such a precisely fitting way that it illustrates the poetic fineness we find in ballads when we begin to listen via the text and its living matrix (to bend Bill McCarthy's term a little [McCarthy 1990]) into the textural, visual, metaphorical images through which the ballad comes alive.*

Note

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THE FORSAKEN FOUNDER, WILLIAM JOHN THOMS *FROM ANTIQUITIES TO FOLKLORE*

In the early nineteenth century, as the modern discipline of folklore was forming out of the impulses of antiquarianism and historical philology, the work of the Germans Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm represented a major step toward systemization for the new discipline. While the Grimms were developing a method for this new "science," William John Thoms (1801-85), in 1846, coined the term, "folk-lore," in the London literary weekly, *The Athenaeum* (Thoms 1846a:862-63). Although Thoms never offered a precise definition of his invention, he himself noted in responding to an inquiry about the introduction of "folk-lore" that "the word took its place, for it supplied a want" (Thoms 1872:340). The want fulfilled was the desire for a new English term for the materials studied by the Grimms in their new scientific discipline. Since 1846, Thoms's coinage has become the name for the field of study as well as what it studies, and "folklore" (with or without hyphen) has continually been defined and redefined with its originator's conception of it long forgotten or insufficiently understood. This paper will attempt to make clear the difference Thoms made or intended with his invented label. We will also discover Thoms's approach to "folklore" and its engagement with the work of the Grimms, especially Jakob's *Deutsche Mythologie*, which Thoms says fostered his interest in the topics suggested by his lexical invention (Thoms 1872:339).

Last year, in observance of the sesquicentennial of the discipline's English name, William John Thoms was mentioned in passing by folklorists probably more than he had been in the previous one hundred fifty years. Most folklore scholars are familiar with William Thoms's famous article from *The Athenaeum* in which he invents the word "folk-lore" but know little about the rest of his corpus, which must be consulted if we are to understand more fully his notion of folklore and the context in which the naming occurs. Nevertheless, it may be appropriate to start with Thoms's oft-cited August 22, 1846, letter, published under a pseudonym, Ambrose Merton, because it provides perhaps his most complete statement on the nature and domain of folklore. Thoms begins:

> Your pages have so often given evidence of the interest which you take in what we in England designate as Popular Antiquities, or Popular Literature (though by-the-bye it is more a Lore than a Literature, and would be most aptly described by a good Saxon compound, Folk-Lore,—(*the Lore of the People*)—that I am not without hopes of enlisting your aid in garnering the few ears which are remaining, scattered over that field from which our fore-fathers might have gathered a goodly crop. [862-63]

Although "Folk-Lore" is defined only as "the Lore of the People" and is introduced in a parenthetical comment, it is clear that Thoms is placing his coinage in relation to the English antiquarian tradition to which it is aligned but from which, for Thoms, it is already distanced. The "ears" of folklore to be garnered are, judging from the list at the beginning of the next paragraph, "the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, & c., of the olden time," (Thoms 1846a:863), but this catalog of examples is shared with

popular antiquities and does not demarcate a new set of materials to study. If "Folk-Lore" is an "apt" word to fill a need for a new term, then where does the difference really lie between popular antiquities and folklore for Thoms?

One suggestion comes from Thoms in his contribution to *The Athenaeum* the next week when "Folk-Lore" becomes a regular column in the periodical. In the first column as a weekly feature, Thoms mentions the collection of "existing traditions" and asks readers to send him, for publication, relations of local lore of which he gives several examples, such as stories of Devonshire pixies, the headless horses and coachmen of Haddon, and legends of Tregeagle of Cornwall (Thoms 1846b:886). Although his focus is still on old legends or customs, he clearly is asking for the collection of materials still current in oral tradition. Duncan Emrich suggests that "the emphasis implicit here upon field research, personal observation, collecting material from informants . . . is significant" and a distinct shift away from the antiquaries' heavy reliance on manuscripts and published materials (363). More importantly perhaps, Thoms's encouragement of the collection of current materials marks an important move away from the antiquarian approach of searching solely for the long ago. It should be noted here that Thoms the namer was not the first to consider the importance of oral tradition and personal observation, and that even the earliest antiquaries, such as William Camden (1551-1623) and John Aubrey (1626-97), employed similar methods. Also Thoms himself continued to work with antique published materials, which included a reprint of his first book, *A Collection of Early Prose Romances*, and analyses such as "The Folk-Lore of Shakespeare." The major break with antiquarianism that Thoms was trying to make really lay in the more serious, scientific approach to the materials that had begun with Aubrey's *Remains of Gentilism and Judaism* (parts of which Thoms had published for the first time in his *Anecdotes and Traditions*) and developed through a line of influential antiquaries that includes Sir Francis Palgrave, Sir Walter Scott, John Brand (whose *Observations on Popular Antiquities* Thoms calls "the text book of the students of our English 'Folk-Lore'" [Thoms 1846c:887]), and, above all, the great systematizer, Jakob Grimm.

Thoms's impulse to go beyond the mere antiquarian interest in relating the curious turn of phrase or recording the archaic and "irrational" superstition was evidenced even in Thoms's early writings. As early as 1834, in his *Lays and Legends of Various Nations*, Thoms explains why the stuff that he will later call "folklore" and collected in this volume should not be considered trivial or treated as the arcane interest of the antiquarian:

> Everything that exists is, either positively or relatively, possessed of those qualities [materials for reflection and history]; and, should the worth of any object not be immediately apparent, it must be sought for in the uses to which it is capable of being applied: and it is this disposition to search for and exhibit "good in everything," which principally distinguishes the Philosopher from his fellow-man. [Thoms 1834:II,ii]

Besides finding the "good in everything" (might we call this "meaning" today?), Thoms suggests in the "Preface" to *A Collection of Early Prose Romances* that a serious study of popular fiction and tales would result in "the discovery of some unvarying principles of the human mind" (Thoms 1858:xii-xiii). With this lofty goal in mind, Thoms seeks to find answers to the question of the basic similarities among stories across cultures and time.

He cites and responds to Scott's call for "a work of great interest [that] might be compiled upon the origin of popular fiction, and the transmission of similar tales from age to age, and from country to country" (Scott qtd. in Thoms 1834:II, iv-v). Although Thoms eventually abandoned such discovery, he anticipates some of the concerns of later folklorists by trying to construct a model of diffusion, acknowledging Thomas Keightley's work in *Tales and Popular Fictions* on what would become known as the models of "monogenesis" and "polygenesis." Doing the comparative work for *Lays and Legends* and drawing on his incredible erudition, Thoms arrives at the solution that there must be a common source area for "popular fiction," probably in the Far East (Thoms 1834:III, iv).

Although Thoms employs his "philosophy" to explore the "unvarying principles of the human mind," he does not ignore cultural differences. He uses the metaphor of a skeleton to explain how forms and structures exist across cultures, but, like the skeleton, are covered with varying surfaces. It is with regard to the surfaces, or the special contents of a tale told in a particular context, where national or cultural characteristics appear (Thoms 1834:III, ii). Based on the early work, *Lays and Legends*, we can see that Thoms believes that specific folklore content is reflective of cultures. As his conception of "folklore" evolves, especially from his reading of the *Deutsche Mythologie*, Thoms's use of comparative methods becomes even more important. We will return to this connection to the Grimms later in this essay.

There is other evidence of Thoms's attempt to develop a scientific approach to the subject matter he would term "folklore." In the *Lays and Legends*, Thoms tries to arrive at a notion of the central forms or genres prevailing in the materials collected for each nation. For example, Thoms finds the fabliaux to be central to French popular literature and discusses the nature of the genre and its contents among the French (Thoms 1834:I, ii-vii); for the Tartars, he finds the epic poetry (*Dschangartschi*) of the Calmuc Tartars to be central and reflective of their culture (Thoms 1834:V, ii-vii). Along with the national focus, Thoms includes materials from subcultures within some of the nations, recognizing their heterogeneity. Thus, among the materials from Ireland, Thoms includes the stories of recent Palatinate settlers in Ireland, and, with respect to Spain, he focuses on Moorish culture. Another example of Thoms's more modern conception of his field of study can be seen in this passage from "Lays and Legends of France" which describes the different approaches of the antiquary and the folklorist (and, perhaps for today, the folklorist and the historian with regard to oral history): "How many an antiquary, who has travelled miles to see a druidical monument, has cried 'Pish'—at the legend with which his peasant guide would illustrate it, when reflection would have told him, that under the garb of fiction the truth of history is frequently concealed" (Thoms 1834:I, vi). Finally, one more quotation from *The Athenaeum* "Folk-Lore" column illustrates Thoms's rather modern view of collecting precise texts. In an editorial answer to a contribution from "R. P." on "Devonshire Pixies," Thoms declares that

> we have retrenched those portions of R. P.'s communication which treated of generalities only. That there is a vast body of "traditionary lore" among our peasantry cannot be doubted. Our object in opening our columns to communications on the subject of Folk-Lore was, not to establish that fact, but to collect the legendary fragments themselves. [Thoms 1846e:955-56]

Thoms, unlike many of the antiquarian authors, is concerned with getting specific and accurate texts rather than simple summaries of oral narratives or generalized descriptions of customs or events.

We have noted earlier the formation of Thoms's historical, comparative method for the analysis of folklore materials, but when he replies to the first contribution to his *Athenaeum* column by someone other than himself, we see what his mature interpretive approach will be. John Bruce writes on "Medical Superstitions" and the custom of passing a child through a split ash tree to cure the child of rickets. In a postscript, Bruce asks "Merton" (Thoms) to "give us the substance of Grimm's collections upon any point which may be brought before you" (Bruce 1846:909-10). Thoms fulfills this request, beginning the next week with a response offering a full-length discussion from the *Deutsche Mythologie* with the addition of some noted English antiquarian authorities (Thoms 1846d:932). This method of bringing other versions, from Britain and the world, to bear comparison with the contributor's material, with final analytic authority left to Grimm, would prove to be Thoms's primary approach throughout his editorship of "Folk-Lore" in *The Athenaeum* and of the folklore contributions to *Notes and Queries*, which Thoms founded in 1849 and which he edited until 1872. Moving beyond the usual sphere of the antiquarian, Thoms employs the comparative method because

> it should be remembered that legends and traditions which are considered trifling, in the localities to which they more immediately relate, assume an interest in the eyes of strangers to whom they are not familiar—and an importance when placed in opposition with cognate materials, by the light which they both receive and furnish from such juxtaposition. [Thoms 1846c:887]

That Grimm showed him the way to this method can be little doubted when Thoms writes that the *Deutsche Mythologie* is "a mass of minute facts, many of which, when separately considered, appear trifling and insignificant,—but, when taken in connexion with the system into which his master-mind has woven them, assume a value that he who first recorded them never dreamed of attributing to them" (Thoms 1846a:863). Thoms's comparative folklore worked well in establishing "scientific" replies to gentlemanly correspondence, but it never evolved into a complete theoretical system of the kinds that the Grimms had developed for determining generic distinctions in the prefaces to the *Kinder- und Haus-Märchen* and the *Deutsche Sagen* or that Jakob formulated for a national mythology in the *Deutsche Mythologie*. Never having completed a coherent overarching system, Thoms in his practical application rarely went beyond the basic steps he finds in the long passage that he translates in his review of the *Deutsche Mythologie* and which he says best illustrates Grimm's method. The passage concerns the folklore of the cuckoo and moves from proverbial German expressions about the bird to cuckoo-lore in German subcultures, along the way comparing the attributes assigned the cuckoo in the various legends and sayings and doing historical philology with important words associated with the cuckoo that might tie together the varied lore. At this point, Thoms cuts off the sequence by simply telling us that Grimm goes on for four more pages (Thoms 1846f:1186-87). Although he praises Grimm's work, Thoms stops the passage short of the cuckoo's mythological representations. Generally, Thoms, in his editorial reviews or in his own articles, is not willing to place phenomena in a comprehensive folkloric or

mythological relational system. Suggesting that Thoms lacked a system, however, may be somewhat misleading, for, as Richard Dorson points out, Thoms had "the whole apparatus of folklore investigation outlined: direct field observation, accurate reporting, communication of specific data, and then the comparative commentary" (Dorson 1968:84). With "his constant handbook, the 'Deutsche Mythologie' of Dr. Jacob Grimm" (Thoms 1846f:1187) by his side, Thoms was doing folklore, not popular antiquities.

The above conclusion is important as it cuts against the grain of the few recent critical works written on Thoms, such as those by Bennett and Tokofsky, which scorn what they believe to be the antiquarian "Thomsian heritage" in folklore studies. In his essay, "A Gleaner's Vision," W. F. H. Nicolaisen undertakes the most comprehensive look at Thoms's career to this point to arrive at designating him a "popular antiquarian." Nicolaisen calls Thoms's notion of collecting "a gleaner's vision," referring to a metaphor that both Thoms and the Grimms use to describe their projects. As gleaners rather than harvesters, these early folklorists, it is suggested, spent all of their time looking backward and influenced generations of folklorists who went to the field searching for the leftovers, the survivals from a romanticized (often nationalistic) past. As I have shown in this essay, I do not read Thoms in these terms. But my answer to the complaints about "folklore's" dismal Thomsian heritage has more to it than simply showing the detractors that Thoms asked contributors to report on contemporary materials, that he consistently used "gleaning," "reaping," and "cultivation" as equivalent terms in describing folklore collecting (beginning in 1834 in "Lays and Legends of Ireland," vi), and that it is just false to argue that "Thoms neglected the social fabric of which lore is a part" (Tokofsky 1996:208). What I am suggesting beyond this is that a rejection, and perhaps worse, a misunderstanding of the namegiver's work and legacy is misguided and springs from the anti-historical theoretical positioning prevalent in the discipline of folklore today. Nicolaisen proclaims that

> as long as the focus is on rescuing neglected customs, fading legends and fragmentary ballads by timely exertion, fieldwork will be just that—one rescue operation after another, always collecting the lore of the folk of one or two or even more generations ago, always snatching brands of the past from the all-consuming fire of the present; and, what is worse to be pleased with it, even proud of it. A gleaner's limited—and limiting—vision! [Nicolaisen 1995:74]

To the contrary, I view Thoms's mission as ennobling. On the one hand stand the efforts of one we might call a gleaner, who in coining the term "folklore," "besought *The Athenaeum* to lend its powerful influence towards [the] collection and preservation" of old traditions threatened by "the Iron Horse then beginning to ride roughshod over every part of the country" (Thoms 1872:339). On the other hand, we might see a scholar with a reverence for and great knowledge of history, who had as one of his goals the preservation of the "interesting" (a concept that Elliott Oring suggests be considered by folklorists when contemplating their discipline), "the good," and culturally significant traditions endangered by the epoch-making events of the Industrial Revolution. It is true that "there has always been and will always be folklore," but that is little justification for the neglect of the past in the present and makes the work of folklife museums and cultural preservationists appear meaningless. Furthermore, the arguments against "gleaning" suppose, ironically, a sort of

evolutionary progress that crowns the present, which itself becomes the past as soon as the specific moment enters the ethnography. As with gleaning, the fruits of the harvest can be measured only after it is over.

Again, as I have attempted to show in this paper, it may not be as much in the materials as in the approach to them that makes Thoms's work instructive for folklore. Thoms does not hold a simple "rear-view-mirror perspective on the world" (Nicolaisen 1995:74). When he turns to the discussion of existing cultural expressions, Thoms's historical and comparative approach is not antiquarian but deals with the problems of continuity and change, tradition and innovation, the past, the present, and the future. The late turn in folkloristics to an emphasis on the ethnographic present need not entail an ahistorical approach. Indeed, how does one understand the emergence of specific forms without an understanding of the historical context in which they arise?

Folklorists have long abandoned a complete knowledge of William John Thoms and have shut themselves off from history. Are we now prepared to abandon "folklore," and if we do, what will be the assessment of our ahistorical harvester's "limited—and limiting—vision" one hundred fifty years from now?

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THE FUNCTION OF FORM IN BOAS'S SOCIAL SCIENCE MODERNISM

The writing of Franz Boas reveals his dual appraisal of the past. On one hand he advocated using scientific and critical thinking to free people from regarding the past precedents of tradition as arbitrators for authority within their lives. On the other hand he looked to the past to provide resources for finding "what is useful and right" for the future (Boas [1928] 1932, 201) His position is more complex than ambiguous, and it becomes clearer when Boasian thought is regarded as complicit with critiques of modernity. Regarded in this manner, his dual appraisal of the past is more an attempt to work out the conflict of ideals that he saw as one of the great difficulties of modern life. By studying folklore and the culture of non-industrialized societies he used their artistic expressions as resources for understanding what he considered the key conflicts in the culture of his contemporaries:

> individualism against socialization; nationalism against internationalism; enjoyment of life against efficiency; rationalism against a sound emotionalism; tradition against the logic of facts. [Boas (1928) 1932, 202]

Major themes in his writing revolve around his analysis of these key conflicts. Through his concern with human agency, antiracist and relativistic orientation toward interpreting culture, fascination with aesthetic experience, and advocacy of a scientific method for studying culture, Boas regarded folk culture as a repository of resources useful in supporting his critique of modern life.

This critical stance toward "the modern" through the study of those considered "not-modern" was a major theme in the modernist movement. Faulkner, Joyce, Kandinsky, Picasso and other artistic innovators all shared Boas's approach of looking at the traditional culture of others to provide a critique of the culture of their contemporaries. It has long been orthodox intellectual history to regard these types of writers and artists as modernists, but the work of social scientists has also been examined in relation to the modern movement (Glassie 1975:41 and Bronner 1986:112). One useful means for understanding Boasian anthropology as the social scientific manifestation of modern thought is to examine his interest in form/function relationships. Boas's concern with relationships between form and function reveals that his thought is foundational for incorporating modernist ideas into the social sciences.

What support is there for the assertion that Boas was a social science modernist, and how is his approach toward interpreting "the modern" foundational to understanding the history of folklore as a discipline? The term "modernist" has long been used to describe a range of intellectual movements, artistic styles, and an historical era that has had a major impact on the study of folklore. Theorists have posited that a 19th-century critical appraisal of what was seen as "modern" provided an impetus for the growth of the study of folklore. Simon Bronner, for example, sees modernism as beginning with Victorian era

thinkers who envisioned folklore as the "vivid evidence that forced them to reflect on the gulf between the present and the past, between the modern and the traditional" (Bronner 1986:39). He suggests that these early thinkers saw within folklore qualities that could compensate for the spiritual poverty created through the wealth of modern scientific thought. The writing of antiquarians and romantics supports Bronner's argument and reveals that their interests in folklore were resonant with themes later developed within the modernist movement. Yet they, themselves, cannot easily be described as "modernists."

It is difficult to claim when the word "modernist" first was used to describe artists and thinkers, but the literary critic Franz Kuna explains that by 1890 the term had come into general usage in the city of Vienna where it was used by those who felt "at odds with the age" (Kuna 1991:120). Modernists often positioned themselves as outsiders, and many were expatriates. Their outsider status became evident not solely in geographic terms but also in intellectual spheres, for those who aligned themselves with the modern movement often took a critical stance through which they challenged the notion of progress. Despite this particular critical stance, however, many modernist thinkers also positively embraced the progressive ideas developed through scientific inquiry, and they sought to employ these resources to remedy modern society's ills. Within this dynamic—even paradoxical—interplay, one of the great themes of modernism emerges, namely the desire to integrate the apparently detached, rational method of the scientist with the involved, affective passion of the artist. The theme emerges in multifaceted variation in the "movement of movements" that Bradbury and MacFarlane describe as "modernism," and the work of the modernists resulted in an incredible burst of creative energy that flourished in Europe and America until well into the 1930s (Bradbury and McFarlane 1991:191).

Because an array of artistic styles, ranging from abstract expressionism and surrealism to naturalistic drama and stream-of-consciousness prose, have all been described as components of the modernists' repertoire, it is futile to attempt to establish a succinct definition of modernism. Furthermore the modernist project was transdisciplinary, involving visual artists, novelists, playwrights, poets, musicians, film directors, and other artists. Within these array of styles, the artists display widely varying assessments of both the past and the present. For example, a surrealist would have looked to the signs and symbols of the past to comment on the absurdities of the present whereas an artist subscribing to vorticism would have attempted to display a total rejection the past by creating an art of invention with "no echo of a former age" (Bradbury and MacFarlane 1991:187). Because of the wide range of modernist genres, styles, and orientations, tracking down the modernist themes within the writings of social scientists would be an arduous task. While Boasian anthropology and folklore theory reveals that his orientation was complicit with the thought of many modernists, a most useful means for understanding Boas as a social science modernist is to examine the specific techniques that he used in his work that reveal his affinities to the modern movement.

An entry point for examining affinities between Boasian anthropology and modernism is to consider Boas's work as a nascent form of structuralism. Structuralism has been termed "social science modernism," and writers have seen Boasian anthropology as a prototype for structuralism in linguistics and material culture (Stocking 1974:8). Boas's

methods have affinities to the approaches used by structuralists, and, as Henry Glassie avers, "structuralism is the social scientific manifestation of modernist thought" (Glassie 1973:314; 1975:41). These connections between structuralism and modernism become transparent when one considers how structuralists' approaches are comparable to the orientation of artists and writers who contributed to the modern movement. Their approaches and contributions demonstrate their mutual concern with finding a place for art within scientific inquiry and for science within artistic creativity.

Glassie argues that structuralism is modernist in that its practitioners are concerned more with principled abstraction than with particularistic realism, in process over product, in hidden law rather than in manifest shape, and more with "the universal, the unconscious, the simultaneous, the systematic" than with the linear particularism of other cultural theorists (Glassie 1975:41). This orientation becomes evident when a structuralist works to describe the system of production used by an artist rather than to place cultural traits within a taxonomy designed to support a particular theory of cultural evolution, geographical distribution, or historical progression—be it progression through the growth of a story or the development of a nation. Describing the system for artistic creation was central to much of Boas's work, for his writing reveals his interest in the formal properties of artistic expressions. True to the modernist orientation, his approach to material culture was more clearly directed toward finding patterns of culture that suggest general principles about human behavior rather than in cataloguing artifacts to chart the evolutionary development of a particular society. To ascertain how Boas's orientation to questions of form lays the foundation for structuralism and how influences from modernism made a significant impact on Boasian anthropology, it is useful to examine a key concept of modernist thought—a modernist axiom developed within a profession seemingly disconnected from folklore and anthropology: architectural theory.

Claiming that the modern movement began with the writings of one architect from Chicago would simplistic, and modernism cannot be reduced to one statement. But Louis Henri Sullivan is recognized not only for his innovations on the architectural design of skyscrapers but also for first publishing a major tenet of modernism and a linchpin for structural studies when he stated in *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1896 that:

> It is the pervading law of all things organic, and inorganic, of all things physical and metaphysical, of all things human and all things super-human, of all true manifestations of the head, of the heart, of the soul, that the life is recognizable in its expression, that form ever follows function. This is the law. [Sullivan (1896) 1975, 13]

In stating that "form follows function," Sullivan asserted that the artistic impulse is not merely a desire to decorate. Sullivan saw the artistic value of architecture as residing not in how well builders ornamented cathedrals with gargoyles perched within their parapets but in how well the designers merged aesthetic sensibilities and technical necessity at a primary level thereby allowing workers to construct their buildings. By arguing that form must follow function, Sullivan and other modern architects worked to fuse technical knowledge with aesthetic sensibilities in the designing of their buildings. Thus, through

concrete, steel, glass, and marble, they sought to unify two impulses: the artistic and the scientific.

His axiom that "form follows function" makes the claim that the essential nature of a phenomenon is revealed through its morphology: that is, a thing must take its particular appearance to serve its particular function. While Sullivan regarded the axiom "form follows function" as a formula that could describe all aspects of life, he employed it the design of his buildings. By attempting to use form solely to further the functional capabilities of his buildings, Sullivan asserted that if a building is designed to support the functional requirements demanded by both its users' needs and its positioning within its spacial environments, then the aesthetic quality will emerge from the formal properties inherent within the architect's design.

Sullivan was not saying that a building should not serve to further the function of providing aesthetic pleasure; instead he argued that the aesthetic appeal of a building must emanate from the designer's ability to integrate technical necessities into its construction rather than as a decorative afterthought. To use architectural forms for no apparent reason, to add on embellishments due to conventional practices, traditional forces of habit, and the whim and fancy of popular taste would violate the essential integrity of a building. As did any modernists, he regarded decoration merely for the sake of decoration as dishonest, and this ideas was carried to its extreme in 1910 by the Viennese architect Adolf Loos when he declared ornamentation "a crime" (Blake 1977:39).

Although logical extensions of modernist thought, such as Loos's dogmatic edict, can be criticized for their proponents' overly optimistic evaluation of scientific thought, it remains intriguing how carefully and comprehensively modern architects sought to use form to unite technology with art. They embraced scientific ideas to break the shackles of tradition by burying irrelevant architectural principles of the past, challenging the established conventions of their predecessors, and creating buildings designed to meet the needs of their clients rather than to provide a paean to history. Some concrete illustrations make their methods and goals explicit. For example, if the functional requirements did not determine that the architect place the fluted shafts of the Greek Doric Order into the building's facade, then the columns could not be included in the design. Modernists regarded the old order as belonging to the Classical era, and what was needed in the present was a purer architecture that used technology as the basis for the developing the elements of design. Because modernists recognized the integral role that form had to play in challenging the force of past conventions, they stopped hiding the undergirdings of their constructions behind decorative features and began placing form into the foreground. In the same manner that modern painters, dramatists, writers, and sculptors foregrounded form to remind people that realism is but a style, modern architects sought to eliminate the elaborate facades and ornaments that hid their creation's structure and instead estheticized technology (Bullock 1991:62-65). By integrating structural supports into their buildings' design, they sought to create a more honest architecture to reveal rather than to hide artifice (Frampton 1992:51). For example, steel girders and other support structures were brought into the open and made visible to those who used the buildings and to those who passed

by, and building materials were selected less because they appealed to the tastes of the designer or client and more because they matched the users' needs.

Rather than solely using these types of principles as prescriptions for correct design, they all can be inverted and used to analyze people's creative expressions. If form follows function, then the maxim can be applied *ex post facto* to allow a thinker to educe how the morphology of any cultural expression provides clues to its function within a society. The idea was used by scientists when studying biology, geology, and physical phenomena, and it was brought into cultural anthropology by Franz Boas. Whereas other modernists brought form into the forefront primarily to fulfill their needs to say new things in new ways, Boas focused his creative energies in this modernist orientation to analyze how other artists used form. From developing early studies of physical anthropology to studying pattern in woodcarving, weaving, language, and song, it becomes clear that Boas regarded a scientific examination of form as a key means to analyzing his research topics (Dundes 1964:19).

Boas's undoubtedly developed his interest in form/function during his training in the sciences. His anthropological theory, however, shows that he broadened his interest in the morphology of human physiology to an interest in the morphology of artistic expression. In this respect, he extended his method of examining form/function relationships from physical anthropology into cultural anthropology, and Boas's methods reveal that he was clearly influenced by modernists such as Sullivan. The central themes of Frank Lloyd Wright's teacher are resonant with key ideas within Boas's writing, and the anthropologist was engaged with modernist ideas through his discourse with theorists who contributed to the modern movement (Boas [1927] 1955:13). Boas's writing even reveals his direct influence from modernists working within artistic and literary fields, for he read theorists of modern art as well as modernist writers (Boas [1927] 1955:15, 74). His modernism emerges lucidly in a general orientation that demonstrates how he accepted the maxim that form follows function, used a scholarly orientation designed to challenge the established order of the past, and completed his work to address societal problems and social concerns (Boas [1927] 1955:15).

Compatible with modernists' agendas, he selected his general research problems to challenge the authority of earlier scholarship by specifically critiquing the theories of cultural evolutionists (Boas [1927] 1955:1). By dismantling their evolutionary paradigms, Boas worked to provide ammunition for the battle against the prejudice and social problems that it caused. By reading the extent to which Boas worked to challenge his readers' assumptions that their own culture was superior to those perceived as "primitive," Boas sought to translate the modernist plea for a "noble cultural mission" of artists to a moral mission for social scientists (Boas [1898] 1982:624; Kunz 1991:122). Rather than creating paintings, music, plays, and poetry to challenge ethnocentrism, Boas promoted the rigorous scientific description of form/function relationships as one means to combat racism.

Boas's modernism was particularly evident when he displayed his interest in using science to ameliorate social problems and to challenge orthodox dogma by examining the relationship between form and function. A vivid application of this modernist orientation

becomes apparent when he dissected established arguments that fused race with linguistic and cultural development. In numerous articles, Boas asserted that physiological variations in form and function are influenced more by social habits than by biology (Boas [1922] 1982:37). Not only did he assert that physiological form is affected by diet, physical exertion, and other socially-influenced function, but Boas also asserted that the human body's need to fulfill various functions within its environment affects its form (Boas [1931] 1982:9). He issued this argument to refute essentialist perspectives that connected physical evolution with cultural development, and Boas saw examinations of form/function relationships as useful means for separating race from culture. Within these arguments, Boas's analysis of form/function relationships was a primary method in his physical anthropology, an approach that he derived from the practice of biologists (Boas [1928] 1932:108).

His articulation of the importance of studying form was also evident in his approach to cultural anthropology. To critique cultural evolutionists, Boas studied the form and content of artistic expressions to question evolutionary interpretations of culture. By showing how not just the content but the patterns of art and narrative are diffused across different geographic regions, Boas used form as a resource to support his argument that cultural contact, not evolutary stages, influences how societies develop (Boas [1927] 1955:175). By isolating formal properties of material culture, stories, music, and dance, Boas had ample resources for demonstrating how artistic expressions display similarities across geographic regions and linguistic boundaries. He used the evidence to critique the idea that independent, autochthonous origins explain the similarities between cultures, for the distribution of patterns in the design of Potawatomi pouches, for example, show their continuities to similar patterns among neighboring groups. Move outside of a set geographic region, and the similarities cannot be found. Using these and similar examples from a range of genres, Boas made his case that diffusion is the source for cross-cultural similarities rather than biological predisposition. In all of these discussions, Boas analyzed form to show in a comprehensive manner that primitive art is far from primitive, thereby further challenging theorists who portrayed art as either evolved or devolved through prerequisite, and even preordained, evolutionary stages (Boas [1927] 1955:140).

Although he used an analysis of form to challenge anthropological theories of the past, Boas also studied the relationship between form and function to understand artistic creativity on its own terms. In his summary of fieldwork for the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Boas provided an explicit demonstration of his use of Sullivan's axiom. In discussing the design of North Pacific fish-clubs, he challenged the idea that the formal properties of art are used only as decoration:

> While it is certainly true that in most cases the artists decorate the objects with the totem of the owner, there are a number of cases in which the reason for applying certain animal designs is founded on other considerations. This is very evident in the case of the fish-club, which is used in despatching halibut and other fish before they are hauled into the canoe. Almost all the clubs that I have seen represent the sea-lion or the killer-whale—the two sea animals which are most feared by the Indians, and which kill those animals that are to be killed by means of the club. The idea of giving the club the design of the sea-lion or killer-whale is therefore rather to give it a form appropriate to its function, and perhaps, secondarily, to give it by means of its form great efficiency. [Boas (1899) 1974, 103]

In this passage Boas explicitly asserted that a close relationship exists between the form of an artifact and its function. In the case of some objects, such as fish-clubs, the formal properties are abstracted representations of animals embodying qualities connected to the function of the object. The animal carvings are not merely decorative, they contribute to the force of the weapon's power. This force is harnessed by abstracting the formal qualities of the animal and integrating them into the design of the club. In providing other examples, Boas conceded that the form/function relationship is not always as evident, for he accepted that various totemic signs can serve more as decorative details than as components essential to an object's function. Whereas he seemed to accept form follows function as a law, Boas recognized that others may not share the same perspective.

In his early essays, Boas tended to study form in relation to symbolic representations: form is frequently created through the abstracted properties that signify natural and supernatural phenomena. As his thought developed, Boas's focus expanded, and he wrote about the qualities of form that is devoid of content. Rather than linking form to symbolic representations, Boas asked his reader to consider the purely formal properties inherent in the creative act, itself. Boas offered an intriguing discussion of the relation between function and pure form as revealed through basket making. After discussing how crafters create their work, Boas provided a unified vision of artistic expression in which he articulated Sullivan's position that esthetic sensibilities and technical mastery are identical:

> We reach the conclusion that a number of purely formal elements, some of which are more or less closely connected with technical motives, others with physiological conditions of the body, and still others with the general character of sense experience, are determinants of ornamental art. From this we conclude that a fundamental, esthetic, form interest is essential; and also that art, in its simple forms, is not necessarily expressive of purposive action, but is rather based upon our reactions to forms that develop through mastery of technique. [Boas (1927) 1955:62]

Boas's discussion further developed the "form follows function" maxim, for he asserted that form is the action of creating pattern within a work of art. The esthetic appeal of art is derived, at least in part, by individuals' reactions to the process of creating form through the manipulation of material. In Boas's own words, "complete automatic control of a technique, and regularity of form and surface pattern are intimately correlated" (Boas [1927] 1955:22). Artistry, thus, is the technical process that allows a person to create. It is not in the decorations placed over the creations. In these respects, Boas joined company with other modernists who argue that artistic and technical knowledge is united at a primary level within any creative act.

Accept this perspective, and Boas's method reveals its affinity to structuralism. Just as it seems to be a leap of faith to regard structuralism as an approach to understanding aesthetics, it also seems to be an anachronistic breach of convention to consider Boasian anthropology as "structuralist." The linguistic turn within folklore scholarship is seen as occurring during the 1960s. Lévi-Strauss's early structural studies made their first appearance in the 1950s. Even Propp's formalism, an approach that Simon Bronner and others deem "structuralist," was not used by American folklorists until Laurence Scott

wrote his 1958 translation of the *Morphology of the Folktale* (Bronner 1986:113). But the basic approach used by many structuralists is present in his method of study (Stocking 1974:8). His use of syntagmatic structuralism is evident when he broke down wholes into their component parts, compared how the various components are interrelated, and then examined the patterns revealed by analysis to other structures within a particular culture (Boas [1927] 1955:280). Another example from *Primitive Art* illustrates his method. By writing that the particular "art style can be fully understood only as an integral part of the structure of Northwest coast culture," Boas asserted that one means for examining social structure is to examine the patterns of a style of art and correlate it to patterns of culture. (Boas [1927] 1955:280) To support this assertion he read an understanding of rank and privilege out of a study of carvings on house fronts, totem poles, and masks. By concluding that within the Northwest Coast culture area "the most outstanding feature is the intimate association between social standing and art forms," Boas employed his proto-structuralistic method (Boas [1927] 1955:280). His claim was that if there is a structure to the general culture of a group, then the means for determining aspects of this structure is through studying the form of specific cultural expressions. If only certain styles of carvings of specific animals appear in a set position on certain buildings, for example, then the patterns evident through the expressive forms provide clues for discovering broader cultural patterns. Unlike some structuralists, Boas did not regard artistic expression solely as the manipulation of form. He also examined the various semantic valences of signs and symbols, and thus he did not reduce the essence of art to its structural characteristics. Instead, he analyzed the formal properties of artistic expression as a method for ethnographic inquiry. As Stocking claims, Boas can be seen more as providing a foundation for structuralism rather than a full statement of a theory of structuralism (Stocking 1974:8).

Boas did not fully exploit this prototypical method of syntagmatic structuralism to compare an expressive form's morphology with other patterns of culture. Nevertheless his approach shows affinities with what Henry Glassie terms the "systematic method," an approach that Glassie regards as central to numerous structuralistic studies:

> [The method] commences with the (generally tacit) isolation of an object. After the object is selected a hierarchy is identified which consists of two analytic stages, each comprising a static (structural) and a dynamic (functional) complement; these are located above and below the object, so that by a pair of moves the analyst can control the object's entire system. [Glassie 1973:316]

Demonstrated in various permutations in *Primitive Art*, such as his reading of social status by examining the patterns of totemic carvings on houses, Boas's approach followed precisely the method described by Glassie. He selected a particular object, analyzed its composition, and explained the interrelationships between its composition and how it is used by members of the society (Glassie 1973:317). This method is an extended interpretation of interrelationships between an object's form and its functions, and it demonstrates how Boas used Sullivan's axiom to provide a foundation for structuralism within folklore and anthropology through his employment of the systematic method.

The work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Vladímir Propp, Alan Dundes, Henry Glassie, and others who use structuralist approaches suggests that structuralism is an inquiry into the workings of the mind (Lévi-Strauss 1955:123; Propp [1928] 1968:106; Dundes 1980:24; Glassie 1975:41). All are concerned with the relation between the systems of signs and unconscious cognitive processes, a concern linking these social scientists to the modern movement (Bronner 1986:112). Boas's writings demonstrate his interest in considering formal patterns in relation to unconscious cognitive processes (Boas [1927] 1955:1). This interest was particularly evident in his writings on language, for Boas wrote that "the general concepts underlying language are entirely unknown to most people" (Boas [1920] 1982:289). In another passage, he shows that he had developed the idea that linguistic processes involve unconscious cognitive processes early in his career when he stated that "grammatical categories and forms have never risen into the consciousness of the speaker," contending that social scientists must research the unconscious properties of cultural expression (Boas [1907] 1974:279). It is significant that he rejected a complete psychoanalytical model, for he saw the unconscious processes of linguistic behavior as qualitatively different from the operations of the Freudian unconscious. In this respect, Boas showed a congruency to contemporary linguistic theory. In direct opposition to psychoanalytically-oriented literary critics such as Jacques Lacan, Noam Chomsky asserts that his discussion of the unconscious component of an individual's knowledge of language is not be integrated within a Freudian model (Chomsky 1986:269; Leitch 1983:10-12). Unlike the chaotic, disturbing, even occasionally vile unconscious of Freud, the unconscious of Boas, Lévi-Strauss, and Chomsky is patterned and ordered, and their theories present no discernible elements of malignancy innately bestowed upon the human psyche.

Another affinity between Boasian anthropology and structuralism within Chomskyan linguistics also demonstrates another congruency between the modernist movement and structuralism. Although Chomsky developed transformational-generative grammar to compensate for limitations of structuralism in linguistics, his theory of language can be regarded as an elaborate form of structuralism (Chomsky 1957:19). One elaboration is that by adapting mathematical principles to describe linguistic processes, Chomsky made the generative aspects of language processing a central issue aspect of his theory of syntax. As stated by Chomsky, the generative principle of language states that a finite number of linguistic components allows a speaker to create an infinite number of sentences (Chomsky 1986:7). Using a small number of speech sounds, a competent user of a language can create and understand an infinite number of novel utterances, the meanings of which may refer to completely novel situations.

The generative principle can be used to describe a range of artistic expression, and Boas displayed a clear understanding of the idea. He demonstrated his understanding of the generative principle, for example, by stating that "novelty consists generally in the combination of old pattern elements in new ways" even though "the authors of these designs are convinced that they have created something new" (Boas [1928] 1955:157). In Boasian anthropology this process of combining and recombining is not limited to the formal aspects of material culture, as Boas applied it to a study of narrative. Discussing

myth, Boas argued that stories are created through a "combination of well-known elements, largely current in the folk-lore of the tribe, but partly borrowed from a neighboring people" (Boas [1905] 1974:140). The generative principle, thus, allowed Boas to describe individual aspects of creativity as well as to support his claim about the importance of diffusion. Implications of examining an artist as an innovative recycler rather than solely as an engineer become more fully explored by later structuralists, but Boas outlined the basics of a process that Lévi-Strauss later termed "bricolage" (Lévi-Strauss 1962:17).

While the claim that modernists are united by their interest in the structure of creative expression is a strong one, one can assert an equally strong claim that an interest in the generative capabilities of artistic systems was also an issue that Boas shared with other modernists. As evidence, consider how the idea of a generative principle of art in which old elements are combined and recombined into an art of the new emerges as a frequent theme within numerous modernist works. Johan Strindberg articulated the principle in providing a rationale for fragmentation in his dramas:

> My characters are conglomerations of past and present stages of civilization, bits from books and newspapers, scraps of humanity, rags and tatters of fine clothing, patched together as is the human soul. [McFarlane 1991:81]

The theme of creating the modern by recycling what has been provided by the past is present in much of the work of those who aligned themselves with the movement (Bradbury 1991:187). It is the organizing principle in works ranging from the grammar of painting formulated by Vassily Kandinsky to the reindividuation of forms achieved by James Joyce in *Ulysses* (Kandinsky [1914] 1947; Burke [1931] 1968:149).

Examining and understanding this recycling process is essential to formulating a structural analysis. When this process is related to unconscious patterns of thought, structuralism displays its manifestation as social science modernism. Boas followed this pattern when he connected the generative capabilities of the human mind with the unconscious in a process he termed "conventionalism" (Boas [1916] 1982:542). While Boas did not regard the unconscious mind as determining all manifestations of art, his idea of conventionalism situates form in the unconscious where it is a significant resource for creative activity. For example, by observing that formal properties emerge through the repetition of rhythmic patterns and that these patterns have the potential to create an emotional state in producer and receiver, Boas linked elements of esthetic appeal with emotional experience in a process rooted, in part, in the unconscious (Boas [1927] 1955:316).

The argument that structuralism is social science modernism is well-supported by a consideration of Boas's interest in form. By examing form in relation to its functions, Boas broke from former precedents in anthropology, demonstrating that culture cannot be interpreted through predetermined biological and historical schema. Instead, he argued that culture is a systematic and dynamic resource that people adapt to their particular environments and needs. By developing a sophisticated understanding of other society's sophisticated uses of form, Boas's theory of culture is as modernist and intriguing as the maxim "form follows function." He relied on modernist ideas when he focused on form

to interpret what is stable in artistic expressions, describe how an entity's form is related to its function, and articulate how various materials are combined and recombined by active minds. In his analyses, Boas regarded form as a resource important for understanding what is conscious and unconscious as well as systematic and unsystematic within human experience. It is primarily through his analysis of the form of artistic expression that Boas developed resources to show that the study of people considered "not-modern" could provide resources for addressing problems caused by modern life.

Boas's writing shows him attempting to work out the ambiguous and often paradoxical challenge of using modern ideas to critique modern life. Along with the artists and thinkers who employed rational and scientific principles to challenge an uncritical acceptance of scientific and technological progress, Boas regarded his work as serving the noble cultural mission of art. Boas demonstrated that rather than employing modern ideas to create artistic expressions, the methods of modernists could also be used to analyze artistic expressions of all groups of people—those regarded as "modern" as well as those regarded as "not-modern." While it would be difficult to provide a complete explanation of what made Boas's scholarship modernist, his relation to this movement of movements becomes clear when one examines how he looked to the formal stability of folklore to interpret its technological, aesthetic, and moral significance. By looking at what was considered not-modern through theories regarded as modern, Boas infused modernism into folklore scholarship and set forth key problems that remain relevant within the discipline.

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THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ARTIST
RUTH BUNZEL AND FRANZ BOAS ON MATERIAL CULTURE

The students of Franz Boas were, by and large, an influential, tight-knit group. While some ultimately parted company with their teacher, many remained quite close to him. Boas' theories and the questions he raised formed the core of much of the work of his students, but his students used their own orientations, field experiences, and scholarly influences to take these ideas in new directions. I wish to consider Boas' impact on the material culture studies of Ruth Bunzel, one of his lesser-known students. Bunzel is best known for *The Pueblo Potter* ([1929] 1972), one of the earliest studies of the relationship between individual artists and the stylistic, formal, and technical traditions within their culture. Over the past few decades, this has become a central question in the study of folklore, but in the 1920s it was a striking departure from both the evolutionary models that had prevailed at the turn of the century and from the Boasian emphasis on particular cultures. Bunzel's choice of topic and approach made her work distinctive, yet it is clear that Boas profoundly influenced her thinking.

Ruth Leah Bunzel, affectionately called "Bunny" by her friends, was born in New York in 1898. Her father died when she was ten. Bunzel's mother, who had inherited money from her family, raised her children in an Americanized Jewish household. Encouraged by her mother, Ruth enrolled in Barnard College to study German. Due to the anti-German sentiments aroused by World War I, she changed her major to European history (Fawcett and McLuhan 1988:29). After graduating in 1918, she found herself with no clear career path. In 1922, Esther Goldfrank resigned as Boas' secretary, in order to study anthropology. Bunzel applied for the position, was remembered by Boas from a course he had taught several years earlier at Barnard, and was hired.

Two years later, when Boas was preparing to travel to Europe, Bunzel decided to spend a summer at Zuni. She hoped to assist Ruth Benedict with note taking and typing and, in the process, to get a feel for whether she would be interested in becoming an anthropologist. Benedict liked the idea, but Boas thought it was a waste of time. He urged Bunzel to work on a project of her own. As she was interested in art, he proposed that she study "the relation of an artist to his work" (a pet idea which he hoped someone would pursue). Boas gave her a work on coiled basketry as a source of ideas for possible research methods,[1] but he left the specific formulation of the project up to her. Elsie Clews Parsons, who was funding Bunzel's secretarial salary, the work in Zuni, and many other projects run by Boas and his students, was not pleased with the idea of sending a completely untrained person into the field. She threatened to withdraw her funds, but, after much debate with Boas, eventually consented.[2] In the end, Parsons would be sufficiently impressed by Bunzel's work that she would fund a return trip to Zuni (Mead 1974:33-35; Hardin 1993:260-261). *The Pueblo Potter*, Bunzel's dissertation based on the first summer of her fieldwork, was well received. Among anthropologists working in the region, this woman, who had entered the field with no formal training in anthropology or art history, was soon

highly regarded. Ruth Benedict described Bunzel's Zuni work as "the best of all the available pueblo studies" (1934:vii),[3] and Fred Eggan would comment years later that "Bunzel was the greatest fieldworker we've had in the Southwest, man or woman" (quoted in Parezo 1993:350).

The Pueblo Potter: A Study of Creative Imagination in Primitive Art is Bunzel's best-known work. The study is framed by two questions: "What, among naive people, are the factors conditioning the form of response of the individual to the esthetic impulse, and what influences in turn produce changes in these conditioning factors?"(Bunzel [1929] 1972:86). Faced with the challenge of single-handedly designing a research project, Bunzel decided that she would need to take an indirect approach. She assumed that Zuni artists would be as inarticulate about their work as the painters she had met in New York. Rather than directly questioning them about the key issues of her work, she decided to rely on criticism, instruction, and problem solving. For the first line of inquiry, she assembled numerous photos of pots from museum collections, in order to solicit the reactions of artists to a variety of designs from the area. For the second, she set out to learn the art by trying her own hand at it (which also enabled her to get criticism from her teachers). Finally, she brought drawing materials and paper, and she constructed papier maché pots so that she could have her informants work out design problems on various surfaces (Mead 1974:34).

As is so often the case, unanticipated circumstances in the field had a substantial influence on the project. When Bunzel arrived at Zuni, she found that factional disputes had led to upheaval in the community. The "progressive" faction (as she termed it), which had been friendly to anthropologists, had fallen into disrepute after several researchers had tried, without proper permission, to photograph midwinter ceremonies. This meant that Bunzel and Benedict would have faced serious problems if they had aligned themselves with the more receptive families. A young English-speaking woman who worked at the Government school finally agreed to help them. She was a member of one of the more powerful "conservative" families, and she was willing to serve as an interpreter—but only for her own family. After an initial period of tension, they were accepted by the family. Although Bunzel eventually made many friends and became welcome throughout the community, her work at Zuni was grounded with this core group. Bunzel did not regret this; the family members were well-informed and supported her work. This method of close association with a single family would eventually become her preferred approach (Bunzel 1952). The Zuni material in *The Pueblo Potter*, while drawn mainly from her experiences with a single family, also includes information from others in the community. Bunzel's fieldwork proceeded faster than she had anticipated, which gave her the opportunity to travel to several other villages in the region. As a result of these unexpected factors, *The Pueblo Potter* has intimate as well as cross-cultural dimensions.

Within the broader task of exploring the relationship between individual artists and prevailing cultural forms, *The Pueblo Potter* follows several major lines of inquiry. Bunzel attempts to discern the styles of each village. To do this, she first examines the limitations that the techniques and materials used place on the artists' designs. After describing the methods and forms shared by all of the villages, she outlines the characteristic qualities of each village's pots. These general principles of design include the division of the surface,

the colors employed, the quality of line, the relative crowding or spaciousness of the design, and tendencies toward stereotyped or innovative design. Turning to the perspective of the artist, she discusses the ways in which designs are conceived through visualization and dreams. She also, through artists' reactions to photographs and to her own efforts at pottery, considers their view of the work of others. At the time the book was written, debates were raging about the role of symbolism in Native American art and about the evolution of designs named for natural objects; Bunzel's analysis incorporates these concerns through consideration of varying design names and of the existing archaeologically and historically datable record of local pottery traditions (Bunzel [1929] 1972).[4]

Through this analysis, Bunzel arrives at a number of important conclusions. She observes two central functions of art: utilitarian value, and the pleasure provided by form. The first is stressed by Pueblo potters, who frown upon pots that are beautifully decorated but weak in construction. The makers of pots are preoccupied with technical perfection. Students are carefully taught all of the steps of manufacture, but they are given no advice on decoration except admonitions to paint carefully. Art is viewed by the potters as an individual expression, and yet an outsider can clearly see that the designs produced by the artists are quite similar to each other. Bunzel concludes that the artists are largely unconscious of the design principles underlying their work and that they frequently accept a prevailing style in direct contradiction to their own expressed intent, simply because the logic of these styles is impressed deeply enough that it seems natural. These potters do not create designs based on their symbolic significance, although they often ascribe meaning to design elements after a piece is completed. Instead, artists find their sources in dreams and visualized images, and, at times, in fragments of ancient pots. Bunzel suggests that the mental images are based on designs that the artists had previously perceived directly. In this way, skilled individuals produce modified reproductions of earlier designs, which are considered personal inventions. This process leads to a recurring sequence, documented in the archaeological and historical record, whereby styles gradually develop and innovations intermittently emerge that soon replace the old forms. These innovations are made successful by technically skilled individuals, whose mastery is sufficient to gain the attention and acceptance of the community. Thus, talented artists who are able to see beyond styles may succeed in changing them.[5]

As an employee, student, and friend, Ruth Bunzel was close to Boas, and her work was clearly influenced by his theories and concerns. Margaret Mead notes that "Gladys Reichard, Ruth Bunzel, and Esther Goldfrank came to have the status of daughters over whose affairs, personal and professional, he [Boas] worried like an anxious father or grandfather" (1959:345). While Boas' direct role in Bunzel's writing and editing is not documented, many points raised in his works on art are echoed in *The Pueblo Potter*. In "The Decorative Art of North American Indians," Boas applies to Native North American cultures Hamlin's theory that artistic motives are often borrowed and reinterpreted, based upon the objects and themes most familiar to a culture.[6] He observes that ceremonial objects tend to have realistic decoration and that esthetics are far less important in this kind of decoration than in that of everyday objects. Boas plays down the importance of the explanations given for designs, noting that these have far more psychological than historical value. He also speculates that in cultures where little representational design is

used, it is probable that their geometric designs did not originate in attempts at representation (Boas 1982a). It is interesting that Bunzel's observations of Zuni style confirm each of these points. As this piece appears in the bibliography of *The Pueblo Potter*, it is possible that Bunzel may have gone into the field with these ideas already in mind. Boas' essay on Alaskan needlecases applies his broader skepticism with neat evolutionary schemes to the subject of design. In it, he emphasizes that a series of objects arranged according to similarities cannot be assumed to represent an historical sequence. Cultures frequently produce simple and complex, representational and geometric designs concurrently. As a result, judgments must be based on traceable history (Boas 1982b). Bunzel's conclusions about the processes underlying changes in pottery design are drawn from direct observation, the insights of artists, and historically documentable sequences. Her sensitive treatment of the elaborate dynamics of tradition, innovation and revival would not have been possible if she simply arranged artifacts according to similarities or an evolutionary scheme. *The Pueblo Potter* drew inspiration from, and was also structured in response to, Boas' critiques of prevailing academic theories.

Primitive Art, Boas' major work on the subject, was published in 1927, the same year in which Ruth Bunzel submitted the thesis later published as *The Pueblo Potter*. Although much of *Primitive Art* is drawn from Boas' earlier work on art, its new material includes two examples provided by Bunzel. Given their close relationship, it is certainly possible that both scholars were inspired by each other's works in progress. *Primitive Art* centers on the kinds of forms that shape and constrain art within cultures. Cultures have their own characteristic styles, which are understood on a deep level by the people of each culture; these styles constrain design within shared limits so that it becomes meaningful or familiar. These ideal forms are based essentially on standards developed by expert technicians. Artistic effect may come from form alone or from meanings associated with the form (Boas 1955:10-15). Art emerges from highly developed skill, and artists may create for the pleasure involved in the act of creation (1955:25). "A uniform reaction to form is indispensable for the effectiveness of an expressionistic art"; symbols, as opposed to named designs, require this sort of widespread, fixed meaning (1955:351). Pattern is sufficiently fundamental that it limits the imagination of artists (1955:353). In short, Boas' *Primitive Art* is largely in agreement with *The Pueblo Potter* on the nature, function, and influence of style.[7]

Although Bunzel's work was deeply influenced by that of her teacher, it also exhibits her own characteristic concerns. Bunzel's decision to attempt to learn an art form first-hand from the people she studied seems to have shaped her basic view of art. Her descriptions of technique are detailed, and she considers the influence both of structure and of process on the design of a piece. Having participated in the learning process, she is able to make informed observations on the relative importance of design as it is explained to young potters. While she ultimately put heavy weight on the power of culture, her general intent to study the roles of individuals is not found in most of Boas' work on material culture. In attempting to look from the perspective of the individual artist, she considers in detail the process of design creation and visualization. She also suggests practical mechanisms whereby styles influence artists. While in the field, Bunzel could not reconcile artists' statements about the individuality of their work with the actual pieces they created, which seemed conservative and repetitive to her. In her book, she uses this

contradiction to argue for a distinction between the conscious and unconscious levels of an artist's design process. This emphasis on psychology may have been influenced by Ruth Benedict, with whom Bunzel worked at Zuni. Consideration of the manner in which an artist's thoughts, shaped by culture and the technical realities of art, ultimately influence the design of a piece remains important in contemporary scholarship.[8]

Although Ruth Bunzel is best known for *The Pueblo Potter*, her attention turned to other aspects of culture early in her career (see, for example, Bunzel 1938a; Bunzel 1952).[9] In *Chichicastenango*, she writes:

> I, for instance, am only a moderately good observer. I have had to train myself to look at things, to observe them precisely and attentively. Even so I miss many subtleties that would be picked up by someone for whom visual experience is the primary method for orienting himself in life. On the other hand I am naturally very alert to those nuances in verbal communication that can reveal more than the informant intended to say. [1952:xiv]

After *The Pueblo Potter*, she produced only two other works incorporating material culture. One, *Zuñi Katcinas*, is primarily a detailed documentation of rituals, organizational structure, masks, dances, and verbal folklore associated with the Zuni Katcina cult. It is most striking for its organization (according to the Zuni calendar), its painted illustrations of costumes, and for its extensive use of participants' own descriptions. Despite being subtitled "An Analytical Study," it contains little in the way of analysis, aside from the observation that katcina masks conform to rules of style and are integrated within a broader set of costumes, objects, movements and sounds that are characteristic of each katcina. Bunzel's other notable work on material culture, the chapter on art that she wrote for Boas' *General Anthropology* textbook, takes much of its inspiration from *Primitive Art*. Nevertheless, her own interests are clearly present. She deals extensively with the perspective of the artist. Art, she observes, involves two kinds of pleasure—the pleasure of contemplating forms and the pleasure of creating them. Art is a form of problem solving, and the specific natures of different media influence the artist's possibilities and choices. While solid and plastic arts involve refined techniques, "textile art, more than any other, is dependent on a high degree of technical skill," as the design is absolutely integral to the structure of the piece (1938b:554). This does not mean that there must necessarily be distinct styles for each medium; Bunzel notes that "The most striking and successful art is frequently that which handles the material in a completely unconventional way, even denying its nature" (1938b:558). She also reiterates the point that, while distinct cultural styles exist and profoundly influence artists, these styles are also extremely unstable. This essay and *Zuñi Katcinas* continue Bunzel's consideration of themes from *The Pueblo Potter*, but neither work is intended to tackle new analytical problems in the area of material culture.

Within the past few decades, the questions raised by Bunzel have returned to the foreground of American folklore scholarship. At the time when *The Pueblo Potter* was published, Boas and his students held sway within the American Folklore Society. They were interested in folklore primarily as an entry point for understanding culture (Zumwalt 1988:68-98). Bunzel's work, while it centers on the role of individuals, ultimately emphasizes the constraining power of culture, rather than the personal creativity of the

artist.[10] When many anthropologists turned their attention away from folklore, the central focus of American folkloristics shifted to an emphasis on texts. Folklorists concentrated on the structural and poetic aspects of verbal folklore, and they studied diffusion in order to understand why and how texts changed. Once again, the role of individuals was largely ignored. The "young turks" who emerged in the 1960s called for a radical reorientation of the discipline. They wanted to take into account the context in which folklore was created; to expand the focus of the discipline beyond genres of verbal texts and into interaction, performance, material culture, gesture, music, and other realms of artistic expression; and to consider the "folk" as active, creative participants in the process of tradition, rather than as passive, sometimes inept, conduits of folklore.[11] This new generation of folklorists rediscovered works from earlier generations. Scholars intrigued by stories found inspiration in European folklorists such as Azadovskii and Ortutay. Students of material culture found *The Pueblo Potter*. For example, John Vlach ([1981] 1992) and Michael Owen Jones ([1975] 1989) found Bunzel's study helpful in formulating their own work on individual artists. Henry Glassie has called *The Pueblo Potter* "one of the best books ever written on folk art" (1989:260). Bunzel's participant observation, her structural analysis, her use of potters' own terms, her emphasis on documentable historical context, and her consideration of processes of education, design inspiration, and revival remain important elements within contemporary studies of folklore.

Today, while *The Pueblo Potter* is often cited, Ruth Bunzel has slipped into relative obscurity. She is usually mentioned in passing, often as part of a list of Boas' students (for example, Zumwalt 1988:75; Harris 1968:294). After World War II, Bunzel worked as associate director of the Research in Contemporary Cultures project, and she taught at Barnard and Columbia. She was not particularly fond of teaching and, after retiring in the mid-1960s, preferred to focus on reworking old papers (Fawcett and McLuhan 1988:34). It seems odd, given her circle of influential friends, that so little of her work made it into print. Bunzel, like many female anthropologists of her generation, faced a lack of job security based largely on her gender. She once reflected that "There was a time when I wanted to have a stable position, but it wasn't in the cards . . . I had no illusions. I knew as a woman it would be difficult" (quoted in Parezo 1993:305).

Ruth Bunzel died in her home city of New York in January of 1990, having outlived most of her academic peers. Although many of her ideas and approaches remain a part of contemporary scholarship (such as a focus on individual creativity, an awareness of the influence of stylistic revivals, and an interest in the possibilities of participant observation), her convictions about artists' self-contradiction and her characterization of Zuni potters have been criticized. Unfortunately, most of her analysis is based on material that is not actually depicted in *The Pueblo Potter*. Many Zunis feel that Bunzel overlooked the meaningful nature of design because she did not understand that the meaning only persisted while the design was continuously in use. Nevertheless, her book is still a fixture in Zuni high school art classrooms, and contemporary Zunis still discuss and debate her ideas (Hardin 1993:267-269). *The Pueblo Potter* has entered into the body of potential source material for new works, and it will likely continue to be re-evaluated and reworked within the changing framework of Zuni culture.

Notes

1. "Coiled Basketry in British Columbia," by H. K. Haeberlin, James Teit, and Helen H. Roberts (1928)—Dr. Herman K. Haeberlin was one of Boas' favorite students (Mead 1959:14; Goldfrank 1978:6). Boas sent him to join James Teit, the editor of the Jesup Expedition materials, in conducting fieldwork among the Thompson Indians of British Columbia. The goal of the research was the same that Boas later presented to Bunzel. After returning from the field, Haeberlin continued his investigation using baskets in museums and private collections, but his work was cut short by his untimely death in 1918. Teit was too busy working as an advocate for Pacific Northwestern Indians to continue the project, and he, too, died before writing up his findings. Boas gave the remaining notes, drawings, and photographs to Helen Roberts, who did an admirable job of pulling them into a coherent form for publication in the 41st Annual Report of the BAE. Nevertheless, the resulting work was clearly incomplete (parts of the discussion could not be included after museum numbers were inadvertently removed from the accompanying photographs). Boas' notes in the published piece refer briefly to Bunzel's fieldwork (387), which means that Bunzel must have been given an earlier draft of the article before she went to Zuni. Because of the unclear chronology of this work, I will make occasional comparisons in notes, rather than in the main body of my analysis.

2. Esther Goldfrank, in her autobiography, finds this account somewhat suspicious. Goldfrank points out that Parsons was quite supportive when she, a similarly untrained person, set out in 1920 on her first field trip (Goldfrank 1978:22).

3. Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* draws heavily from Bunzel's fieldwork. Benedict, owing in part to her slight deafness, never learned the native languages of the cultures she studied. Bunzel had learned the Zuni language, and was able to work without an interpreter (Benedict 1934:vii; Mead 1959:202-203).

4. Haeberlin and Teit's fieldwork included some consideration of the basic difficulties involved in applying a design to particular basket forms; classification of basket structures, forms, and purposes; consideration of design popularity, origins, and naming; and some critiquing of baskets by experienced makers (Haeberlin et al:1928). This may have helped Bunzel to structure her study.

5. While Haeberlin and Teit discuss general standards for manufacture as articulated in their informants' reactions to particular baskets (1928:161-167), their study does not delve into the process of education. In their account, basketmakers seem far more conscious of the principles that influence their designs, discussing the division of surfaces into fields (1928:233), a general preference for geometric forms (considered "real" designs and distinguished from representational forms) (1928:254-257), and their awareness of copying, modifying, and innovation as parts of the design process (1928:259-303).

6. A. D. F. Hamlin seems to have been a historian of architecture. I have been unable to obtain *The American Architect and Building News* (1898), which is the only reference Boas gives for Hamlin's work within the article.

7. I have not been able to obtain a copy of Bunzel's dissertation, but I suspect that a careful comparison of it with the published version of *The Pueblo Potter* might yield helpful insights into the influence Boas and Bunzel had on each other's ideas about artistic processes.

8. For example, see Kitchener 1994, Glassie 1993, Jones 1989, Brown 1991, Narayan 1989, and Dégh 1995.

9. Goldfrank notes that while Bunzel did extensive fieldwork on Zuni economics, most of this material was never published (Goldfrank 1978:89).

10. Michael Owen Jones notes that he has recently become disenchanted with *The Pueblo Potter*. While Bunzel's book had been an inspiration for some of Jones' fieldwork in folk art, he came to feel that it "virtually championed cultural determinism" (Jones 1987:42). I disagree with Jones' contention that Bunzel refused to believe that the potters and white traders could identify the works of particular artists. She clearly had trouble personally in distinguishing individual traits, but in discussing the trader at Polacca, she states that "He claims that he can tell the maker from the style of decoration, and I do not question that this is probably true" (Bunzel [1929] 1972:65). Nevertheless, I agree with Jones' more general point; Bunzel downplays the importance of the distinctions between most potters' individual styles, and the only individual

creativity that captures her interest is that which successfully inspires changes in shared styles. It is interesting that Helen Roberts, in her analysis of Haeberlin and Teit's fieldwork, came to a different sort of conclusion: "It may be inferred from this study that the women are not closely controlled by habits in their choice of designs and do not display very often pronounced predilections for definite types" (1928:462). While this may reflect the distinct tendencies of the cultures in question, it may also indicate the differing outlooks of these scholars. Boas' own conclusions about Haeberlin and Teit's work seem slightly out of kilter with those of Roberts. Because the Thompson designs do not resemble those of the Klickitat, he declares that "The power of invention of the artist is obviously under the control of tradition" (1928:387).

11. Examples of influential folklore studies that consider individual creators include Abrahams ([1964] 1970), Dégh (1962), Glassie et al (1970), Jones ([1975] 1989), Lord (1960), and Vlach (1976).

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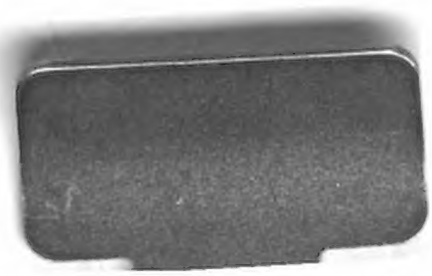

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